Hamilton County Schools
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

2501 Dodds Ave • Chattanooga, TN 37407

For any driving or safety concerns, **call: 1-833-432-8737**
For all other needs, **call: 423-498-5555**

HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL BUS

Table of Contents

POLICY STATEMENT....1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT....1
OUR VISION....2
OUR MISSION....2
JOB DESCRIPTIONS....3
BUS DRIVER....3
GENERAL SUMMARY....3
MAJOR JOB DUTIES....3
GENERAL INFORMATION....4
TWO-WAY RADIO PROCEDURE....4
AM/FM RADIO OPERATION....4
DEALING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA....4
STUDENT MEDICAL EMERGENCY/INJURY....4
TRANSPORTING LARGE OBJECTS ON THE BUS....5
RELEASE TO DEPART....5
SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING....5
SAFETY NOTIFICATION/COMPLAINT PROCEDURES....6
ACCIDENT PROCEDURES....6
TRANSPORTATION TRAINING AND EVALUATION MEASURES....8
RECORDS MANAGEMENT....8
FUELS AND EXPLOSIVES....9
EMPLOYEES' CHILDREN RIDING ON SCHOOL BUSES....9
ASSIGNED SEATS FOR STUDENTS ON SCHOOL BUSES....9
HANDLING OF BODY FLUIDS....10
HEAD LICE....10
STUDENT MEDICATION....10
PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF SCHOOL BUSES....11
PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABLE/NON-PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS....12
MISCELLANEOUS....15
TRANSPORTATION RULES AND REGULATIONS....16
GENERAL....16
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION AND DISCIPLINE....17
ROUTES....17
LEAVE AND/OR ABSENCES....18

DAILY DUTIES 18
EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS 18
EQUIPMENT 19
SAFETY 19
SPECIAL BEHAVIOR 20
SUMMARY OF OFFENSES/DISCIPLINARY ACTION(S) 21
USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA 21
TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS 22
ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS AND CATEGORIES FOR BUS TRANSPORTATION 22
STUDENT RULES OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE 22
OPERATING PROCEDURES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER 25
SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION 26
ROUTE/BUS ASSIGNMENT POLICIES 26
BUS STOPS 26
MEDICATION 26
ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE CHANGES 27
CONFIDENTIALITY 27
NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE 27
PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT 27
PERSONAL HYGIENE 27
TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS 27

POLICY STATEMENT

The Hamilton County Board of Education recognizes that student transportation is a support service necessary to ensure widespread student attendance. It is the desire of the Board to operate transportation services in themost safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

To provide the service of transportation, the Board identifies the following major goals for transportation:

Safety: All operating procedures should consider the protection and best interest of students.

Economy: Express routing, varying time schedules, spacing of bus stops, and other techniques for improving operating efficiency should be employed in program operations.

Time: All routes should be planned to keep the time spent on a bus as short as possible.

This manual contains general information and guidelines only. It is not intended to be comprehensive of all general policies and procedures or their exceptions. For these reasons, should you have specific questions regarding the application of a particular benefit or policy, you should address those questions to your supervisor/principal or to a Human Resources representative.

This manual and its policies, written or oral, supersede all previously published HCDE Transportation manuals. Additional rules and regulations, verbal or written, will be added as needed. Written notice will be given as soon as is reasonably possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read the contents of this HCDE Transportation Department Policy Manual and agree to comply with all guidelines and rules set forth.

Driver Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Driver Signature: _____

OUR VISION

Hamilton County Schools will be the best school district in Tennessee.

OUR MISSION

Hamilton County Schools will create pathways to bright futures for all students in our community by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and support required to realize their full potential!

Transportation will continue to provide efficient and effective operations to support Hamilton County School's Vision, Mission, and ultimately our students.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

BUS DRIVER

Bus drivers for the Hamilton County Board of Education are employed to operate a school bus on a prescribed route and perform transportation-related work as required.

GENERAL SUMMARY

FUNCTION: Transports students on a scheduled route to and from school.

SCOPE: Poor performance would typically result in the corrective or disciplinary involvement of Transportation Manager.

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY: With the review of the Transportation Manager, driver makes decisions regarding additions and deletions of bus stops.

MAJOR JOB DUTIES

- Drives a bus and transports students.
- Maintains discipline of students.
- Inspects and reports bus problems, maintaining cleanliness of bus.
- Completes annual paperwork and daily vehicle inspection reports.
- Performs tasks as requested by supervisor that are related to a transportation function.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TWO-WAY RADIO PROCEDURE

In order to stay within guidelines set forth by the Federal Communications Commission and to receive maximum efficiency from our system, the following procedures should be adhered to:

Unnecessary or malicious use of the radio is prohibited.

FIRST: When using the radio unit be sure to depress the "talk" button firmly and speak distinctly into the speaker at a reasonable distance. When listening, release "talk" button. DO NOT START TALKING UNTIL THE RADIO BEEPS.

SECOND: Be sure to use the proper call numbers. When calling the base station, use your assigned bus number, i.e., "38 to 500". After completing your communication, clear the system by repeating your bus number and "clear", i.e., "38 clear". (Be sure to say bus number.)

AM/FM RADIO OPERATION

Some buses have been equipped with an AM/FM radio for your students' listening pleasure. In recent surveys, it has been determined that the radio, when properly used, is an effective tool in a bus driver's performance of their duty. Headsets and headphones are not to be used by the bus driver. The volume of the music should be kept at a moderate level, which still enables the driver to hear students, monitor the two-way radio, and be aware of emergency vehicles. Radio programs that dwell on politics, controversial issues, religion, or that contain vulgar language are to be avoided. During field trips, if the students' supervisor requests that the radio be changed or turned off, then the driver should and will comply.

DEALING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Drivers and all other personnel are discouraged from talking to the news media regarding accidents, incidents, or other internal transportation-related topics. Statements could end up being used against the employee and HCDE in the event of subsequent criminal or civil proceedings. ***All questions will be referred to the Transportation Manager.***

STUDENT MEDICAL EMERGENCY/INJURY

- If any medical emergency or injury has occurred while on the school bus, Driver will notify Dispatcher immediately via two way radio; dispatcher upon receiving the notification will immediately contact 911 or appropriate authorities for assistance. Then Driver will notify supervisor providing information related to event.
- If the event occurs near a hospital, fire department, or other Emergency Management Service (EMS),the driver may proceed to the hospital, fire department or other Emergency Management Services (EMS) after the notification of event to dispatcher has been completed.
- Bus drivers and assistants should remain familiar with the most recent guidance for seizure management, including how to recognize if a student is having a seizure and how to manage a seizure once it occurs. *(See the HCDE School Health department's Seizure Management guidelines for more information.)*

TRANSPORTING LARGE OBJECTS ON THE BUS

For safety purposes, instruments, equipment, or other objects will not block aisles and emergency exits.

Band instruments, sports equipment, or other objects shall be permitted on the bus if they can be held on the student's lap or stored on the floor beside the student's feet.

Instruments, equipment, or other objects will not be left in the driver's area. If there is a question about a certain instrument, equipment, or objects, the bus driver shall make the decision as to whether it may be transported; however***, no students will be denied transportation***. If an object considered too large is brought onthe bus, the student may be told that the object cannot be transported. The driver should use reasonable judgment in making safety decisions as to whether a large object may be transported on the bus.

If some question or controversy arises, the bus driver should contact the immediate supervisor.

RELEASE TO DEPART

Only upon written approval of the student's parent/guardian and the school principal will the bus driver allow a student to disembark the bus other than at his/her designated bus stop or allow a student to ride their non-designed bus (e.g., a student going home with another student to spend the night). Principals should check with the Transportation department about whether space on the bus permits extra riders. Bus drivers will not release students to any person, with the exception of properly identified law enforcement officials, emergency medical technicians, and School Board staff. Parents/guardians and other adults must receive authorization from the principal and Transportation Manager before being allowed to board the school bus with students on board. In the case of an accident, see the "Accidents" section under "Transportation Rules and Regulations".

SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING

- Principals are responsible for the safe loading/unloading of buses while on school campus.
- Elementary bus duty persons should lead students to the door of the bus, remain there until all are loaded; check around the bus and signal the driver to leave when loading/unloading area is clear.
- Kindergarten students are to be unloaded at designated stop ONLY when a parent/guardian is present to receive student unless otherwise determined by the Transportation department on a case-by-case basis an approved by written wavier. If parent is not present, driver is to notify dispatcher via two-way radio. Do not allow child off bus untildispatch provides permission or other action. If parent is not at the bus stop for (3) or more occasions resulting in the student being returned to their school, the student may be denied transportation for going forward.
- For elementary schools, it is recommended that a minimum of one (1) bus duty person be provided for each bus to ensure students' safety while loading and unloading. Upon the arrival of the bus, the bus duty person will stand at the bus door observing students as they unload and enter the building. When all are unloaded, he/she will check around the bus and signal the driver to leave when area is clear.
- For secondary schools, it is recommended that a minimum of one (1) bus duty person be provided for each five (5) buses to ensure their safety while loading and unloading.
- Where possible, students who walk home should be provided an exit from the school building separate from the exits used for bus loading and unloading.
- The bus duty person(s) should secure the school bus loading zone, ensuring that students are not present in loading and unloading zones as buses are arriving or leaving.

- Principals, or their representatives, should secure the areas where students are to load/unload buses. Unauthorized vehicles parked in loading areas when buses prior to buses arrival will be moved or towed at principal's request.
- Principals will submit their loading/unloading plan to the system's Transportation Manager ten (10) days prior to the first day of school. This should provide a rough sketch showing bus loading/unloading areas and carloading/unloading areas, as well as a narrative detailing the level and quantity of supervision planned.
- It is recommended that principals assign a staff member to remain at the school office for 30 minutes after school dismissal. This person will handle student discipline and provide student information in the event of a bus accident.

SAFETY NOTIFICATION/COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

- Any student, parent, teacher, staff member, or community member is to report school bus safetycomplaints via the Transportation department's Safety Hotline (1-833-432-8737). Students and parents will receive notification and confirm acknowledgement regarding the hotline and its use annually via the student registration process.
- Any safety notification/complaint made via the hotline will be investigated by a representative of the Transportation department within 24 hours of receipt. A determination will be made if the notification/ complaint is substantive or transient. The Transportation Manager will receive a preliminary report of the investigation outcome within 48 hours of receipt of the initial notification/complaint. The Transportation department will develop an appropriate action plan for all notifications/complaints deemed to be substantive in nature. Implementation will begin per the action plan. A final written report outlining the outcomes of the investigation and corrective actions taken (if required) will be submitted to the Chief Operations Officer.
- All final written reports are to be filed in the Transportation department and kept for up to 12 months. A running log of all safety notifications/complaints is kept for each school year and will be available for up to 12 months.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

Should an accident occur during the morning and afternoon run, the driver will notify Transportation Dispatch. Drivers **MUST** report all accidents/incidents by radio or telephone. Transportation will notify the principal that the bus has been involved in an accident and will arrive late. Should any injuries occur; the principal will follow procedure to notify theparents of those students. Should any student be transported to the hospital, the principal or designee (wheneverpossible) should also accompany the transported student(s).

Driver's Responsibility:

In the event of an accident, this procedure will be followed:

1. Students' physical condition must come first.
2. Determine whether students are in danger if they remain on the bus. Evacuate if necessary.
3. Determine whether any student is injured.
    a. ***If injuries DID occur***, administer first aid to your level of knowledge. Notify Transportation and advise of the need for an ambulance.
    b. ***If injuries DID NOT occur***, notify Transportation.
4. Get a list of ALL students on the bus, including parents'/guardians' phone numbers.

5. If the parents/guardians ask to take their student(s) off the bus, have them complete an authorization form.
6. Per the bus driver contract, following an accident, the driver will submit to drug and alcohol testing. The driver may be temporarily removed from his/her driving position pending the investigation. This suspension will be lifted or continued based on investigative findings by school security, HCDE administration, and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency. Should any driver refuse to submit to drug and alcohol testing after an accident, it will be considered insubordination and will result in termination.
7. In case of an accident, drivers should NOT move the vehicle until law enforcement advises. Drivers should NOT admit any guilt to anyone. The accident must only be discussed with police, the driver's supervisor, and/orHCDE administrative staff. Any contact from the other party involved or persons representing them must be reported immediately to the Transportation Manager or designee.
8. Any bus driver involved in a preventable accident where serious injuries or damages occur; will be disciplined accordingly. Should the driver be found at fault, the driver and/or contractor will berequired to have remedial training as established by the transportation department.

Investigator's Responsibility:

Upon receiving notification of an accident, this procedure will be followed:

1. Notify the Police Department. If injuries are reported, request an ambulance.
2. Notify the school principal.
3. Notify the Assistant Superintendent of Campus Support.
4. Complete local, state, and HCDE accident forms and submit to Transportation within 24 hours.
5. Before departing the accident scene, notify the Transportation Manager and/or the Deputy Superintendent.
6. If injuries have occurred, notify the school principal and provide a list of students' names, injuries, and the hospital to which patient was taken. Typically, if one student requires medical attention due to physical injuries sustained from an accident and is required transport to a hospital, it is standard practice to transport all other students to a hospital for evaluation as well.
7. Secure a drug and alcohol test of the bus driver after the accident.
8. If the school is closed, it will become the responsibility of the Transportation department to notify parents of students' injuries, condition, and the hospital to which student was taken.
9. If the school has closed for the day, the principal will be notified at home.

Principal's Responsibility:

Upon receiving notification of an accident, this procedure will be followed:

1. The principal will be provided with a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers for students' riding each route.
2. When the principal, or their representative, is at school and is notified of an accident with injuries, he/she will notify the parents of the injured students.
3. If a student who was a passenger on a bus at the time of an accident does not claim injury at that time but later claims to have been injured, it will be the principal's responsibility to complete a student accident

form and forward the form to the Transportation Manager or the Transportation Compliance Manager and Risk Management.

TRANSPORTATION TRAINING AND EVALUATION MEASURES

- In keeping with goals established by the Hamilton County Board of Education, the Transportation department is committed to continuously improving transportation services provided to students. To achieve these goals, key performance indicators (KPIs) for effective and efficient operations are defined in the HCDE Future Ready 2023 Plan. The following KPIs guide Transportation leadership in the oversight of transportation performance:
  - Buses – Safety Performance: Average number of miles between accidents
  - Buses – On-Time Performance: Average percentage of buses arriving at school as scheduled each day
- Principals are required to complete surveys at the end of each semester to evaluate the following:
  - Transportation AM/PM arrivals
  - Special education bus time span of route for both AM/PM
  - Bus driver professionalism (HCDE contractor or First Student driver)
  - Transportation department communication, including feedback of the following measures for both HCDE contractors and First Student: timely notification of problems; professional and courteous handling of concerns by First Student; and satisfaction with First Student service.
- Buster the School Bus™ will provide training and learning tools for elementary schools (grades K-5) twice per year.
- Bus evacuation drills for emergency situations will be conducted two times per year. The schedule for these drills will be coordinated by the Transportation department. See the Procedures for Emergency Evacuation of School Buses section for details.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- **Bus Maintenance and Inspection:** As stated per the bus driver contract, bus drivers are responsible for conducting daily inspections of his/her bus and preparing and submitting a daily vehicle condition report documenting the inspection according to procedures as directed by the Transportation Manager. Reports are to be filed in the Transportation department and kept for up to 12 months.
- **Background Checks and Health Screenings:** As stated per the bus driver contract, bus drivers will comply with random background checks, drug and alcohol testing, and/or physical examinations as required by HCDE policies or governmental agencies and/or may be necessary to determine the driver's fitness for duty. Background checks, testing records, and examination reports are to be kept current and filed in the Transportation department.
- **Performance Reviews:** Records of performance reviews conducted with bus drivers and other Transportation department staff will be kept on file in the Transportation department.
- **Driver Training Records:** Driver training is to be conducted either online or at an in-service. Records of training completed online is documented via a certification log. Training completed via in-service sessions will be documented via sign-in sheet during the session.
- **Safety Notifications/Complaints:** Documentation of safety notifications/complaints will be recorded as specified in the above Safety Notification/Complaint Procedures section.

FUELS AND EXPLOSIVES

- No explosive or combustible materials may be transported on a public school bus at any time. This includes gasoline, diesel fuel, dynamite caps, bullets, gun powder, or any other material of this nature.
- Only authorized law enforcement officials may have weapons of any kind on a public school bus.
- No student may be on a school bus while being fueled.

EMPLOYEES' CHILDREN RIDING ON SCHOOL BUSES

- Employees may transport their children or grandchildren to and from school on scheduled bus routes if the school the child or grandchild attends is part of the driver's route.
- If at any time an employee's child or grandchild becomes a discipline problem or a safety factor, he/she will be denied transportation on his parent's or grandparent's bus.
- No child will be allowed on a school bus for childcare purposes during the driver's established route times or while the bus is being driven to the garage.
- Children will not be allowed at safety meetings, training classes, or orientation meetings for childcare purposes.

ASSIGNED SEATS FOR STUDENTS ON SCHOOL BUSES

The maintenance of a current, written bus seating chart (by the bus driver) is a tool to be used on buses where there are frequent disruptions. This is a tool recommended for all bus drivers and/or assistants to use, but it is only mandatory for problem routes.

If a driver believes that he/she does not need to utilize a seating chart, he/she should notify their supervisor before the end of the second week of class. If problems arise later in the school year, then the driver may be required to maintain a seating chart.

The procedure for instituting a seating chart is as follows:

1. The bus driver/assistant will assign a seat on the school bus for each student transported.
2. A master seating chart will be maintained by the driver for each of the driver's routes. Forms will be provided by Transportation to compile the master seating chart.
3. Once completed, a copy of the master seating chart must be turned into the Transportation department by the beginning of the third week of school. The school principal must also be provided with a copy of this chart. If any changes are made to the master seating chart, it must be updated and resubmitted.

Seating arrangements should follow these general guidelines:

1. Students with disciplinary problems will be seated toward the front of the bus where the driver can see and control them.
2. The youngest students should be sat toward the front and the oldest students toward the rear.
3. Where possible, identify and seat two (2) responsible and dependable students near the rear exit door.

Students must sit in their assigned seats. In addition to providing control and discipline, each student will know where his/her seat is, and the driver will be able to more easily identify who may have cut/torn/punched holes in the seat, caused a disturbance, etc.

HANDLING OF BODY FLUIDS

Cleaning spills on a hard surface:

1. Use antibacterial cleaner to wash hands thoroughly before and after cleaning spills.
2. Wear disposable gloves during cleaning.
3. Wipe up the spill.
4. Disinfect the area by pouring 10% bleach solution (one part bleach to ten parts water) around the perimeter then inward to the center.
5. Leave the solution on the affected area for 20 minutes before rinsing off with water.
6. Ideally, clean the spill utilizing disposable materials.
7. When a mop must be utilized, disinfect the mop with 10% bleach solution after use.
8. Discard disposable materials in a plastic, sealable bag.

HEAD LICE

After a student has been identified as having "head lice", every effort will be made by the school to have the parent/guardian transport the student home. However, when the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the student should be transported per the latest Health Department guidance as follows:

1. Seat the student **alone** on the front seat of the bus.
2. Transport the student to his/her home.
3. The use of sprays on the bus is not effective; therefore, negating the need to fumigate buses for headlice.

STUDENT MEDICATION

(The following is for informational purposes.)

No school official or teacher will routinely dispense prescription medication to students except in unique situations in which a student's health is dependent upon long-term or emergency medication. If, under these circumstances, a student is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal or the principal's representative will administer the medication in compliance with the following regulations.

Elementary School Students:

Medications in the original prescription bottle must be brought to the school by a parent or guardian. Written instructions signed by the parent are required and will include:

- Student's name
- Name of medication
- Name of physician

- Time to be administered
- Dosage
- Possible side effects, if known
- Termination date for administering the medication

Secondary School Students:

Secondary school students are permitted to bring prescription medication to school provided it is delivered to the clinic or school office at the beginning of the school day. Secondary school students may self-administer medication provided the conditions listed above are met. Discontinued or unused medications must be picked up by the parent/guardian by the end of each semester. All unclaimed medications shall be destroyed by a school official.

PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF SCHOOL BUSES

Reasons for Emergency Evacuation:

- **Fire or Danger of Fire** — If any portion of a school bus is on fire, the bus must be stopped and evacuated immediately. Passengers should move to a point 100 feet or more from the bus and remain there until the bus driver has determined that no danger remains. In the event that a school bus is unable to move and is close to existing fire or highly combustible materials, the "danger of fire" must be assumed and all passengers must be evacuated.
- **Unsafe Location** — In the event that a school bus is stopped in an unsafe location and is unable to proceed, the driver must determine immediately whether it is safer for passengers to remain on the bus or to evacuate.
- **Dangerous Final Stopping Position** – The driver must evacuate a school bus if its final stopping position is consistent with any of the following conditions:
    - Is in the path of any train or on or closely adjacent to any railroad tracks
    - Could change and increase any danger. For example, if a bus is stalled near a body of water or bluff where it could still move and go into the water or over an embankment, it must be evacuated.
    - If there is a danger of collision. Under normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more. A bus positioned over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist should be evacuated.

Important Factors in School Bus Evacuation:

- The safety of students is of the utmost importance and must be given first consideration.
- Prior to evacuation, the bus emergency brakes should be set, the ignition turned off, and the transmission placed in an appropriate gear.
- The driver should supervise the evacuation to guarantee smoothness of evacuation procedures.
- For situations involving injury or potential injury, the driver should carry the first aid kit from the bus.
- Evacuations should be conducted with "deliberate speed". A time interval of 1.5 to 2 seconds per passenger has proven to be the safest and most efficient.
- To ensure a safe exit, passengers must have their hands free. They should leave lunch boxes, books, and other personal belongings on the bus.
- Following evacuation, the bus driver should check to make sure all students have left the bus.

- Per Tennessee state law, evacuation drills must occur twice per year. These drills will be schedule and setup by the Transportation Department.

Common Types of School Bus Emergency Evacuations:

- **Front or Service Door** – Evacuations utilizing the front or service door should be conducted using the same techniques as a routine unloading. The driver will choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered-seat basis.
- **Rear Door** – Evacuations utilizing only the rear exit door have some distinctive features:
    - The bus driver should walk through the bus to the rear exit, open the rear emergency door, exit, and assist passengers in exiting the bus in a safe and orderly manner. The driver will make sure the passengers go to a safe location after exiting the bus.
    - Passengers should remain in their seats until directed by the driver to leave the bus. The driver will choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered-seat basis.
    - The driver should advise all passengers to have their hands free and their coats buttoned. Each passenger should be two steps away from the bus before the next person exits. Taller passengers should be reminded to duck their heads in order to exit safely.
- **Both the Front and Rear Doors** – Evacuations involving both the front or service door and the rear exit door will be rare. If this type of evacuation is conducted, the driver must direct students to the proper exit. (It might be well to utilize paint or pressure tape to mark the midpoint of each bus.)
- **Intermediate Side Door** – For transit buses with an intermediate side door (on the driver's side), this doorway will only be utilized in the rarest of circumstances either where it is critical to have all exits open at once or where it is deemed appropriate to unload students out the driver's side.

School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drills:

Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted two times a year. The schedule for these drills will be coordinated by the Transportation department.

PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABLE/NON-PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS

NOTE: *These guidelines are meant only as a rough guide and are not meant to be all inclusive. Each situation should be analyzed by taking into account any and all unique conditions present.*

It should also be noted that although a driver may not have been cited or fined for an accident or occurrence, this does not mean that the accident or occurrence was non-preventable. Determining guilt or innocence is a legal matter. Determining whether an accident was preventable or non-preventable is an administrative procedure that may use higher standards and guidelines than those required by law.

Struck in Rear by Other Vehicle:

Non-Preventable if:

- Driver's vehicle was legally and properly parked.
- Driver was proceeding in his/her own lane of traffic at a safe and lawful speed.
- Driver was stopped in traffic due to existing conditions or was stopped in compliance with traffic sign or signals or at the direction of a police officer or other person legitimately controlling traffic.

- Driver was in the proper lane waiting to make a turn.

Preventable if:

- Driver was passing slower traffic near an intersection and had to make a sudden stop.
- Driver made a sudden stop to park, load, or unload.
- Driver's vehicle was illegally or improperly parked.
- Driver rolled back into the vehicle behind while starting.

Striking Other Vehicle in Rear:

Preventable if:

- Driver failed to maintain a safe following distance and/or to have his/her vehicle under control.
- Driver failed to keep alert to traffic conditions and could not slow down.
- Driver failed to ascertain whether vehicle ahead was moving slowly, stopped, or slowing down for any reason.
- Driver misjudged rate of overtaking.
- Driver came too close before pulling out to pass.
- Driver failed to wait for car ahead to move into clear before starting up.
- Driver failed to leave sufficient room for passing vehicle to get safely back in the line.

Struck While Parked:

Non-Preventable if:

- Driver's vehicle was legally and properly parked.
- Vehicle was protected by emergency warning devices as setting out or retrieving signals. These provisions shall apply to the use of turn signals as emergency warning lights under federal regulations.

Accidents at Intersections:

Preventable if:

- Driver failed to control speed so that he/she could stop within available sight distance.
- Driver failed to check cross-traffic and wait for it to clear before entering intersection.
- Driver pulled out from side street in the face of oncoming traffic.
- Driver collided with person, vehicle, or object while making a right or left turn.
- Driver collided with a vehicle making a turn in front of him/her.

Sideswipe Collisions:

Preventable if:

- Driver was not entirely in his/her proper lane of travel.
- Driver did not pull to his/her right and slow down and stop for vehicle encroaching on his/her lane of travel when such action could have been taken without additional danger.

Backing Accidents:

Preventable if:

- Driver backed up when backing could have been avoided by better planning of his/her route.
- Driver backed into traffic stream when such action could have been avoided.
- Driver failed to get out and check proposed path of backward travel.
- Driver depended solely on mirrors when it was practical and prudent to look back.
- Driver failed to get out of cab periodically and recheck conditions when backing a long distance.
- Driver failed to sound horn when backing.
- Driver failed to check behind vehicle parked at curb before attempting to leave parking space.
- Driver relied solely on a guide to help him/her back.
- Driver backed from blind side when he/she could have made a sight side approach.

Accidents Involving Rail-Operated Vehicles:

Preventable if:

- Driver attempted to cross tracks directly ahead of train.
- Driver ran into side of train.
- Driver stopped on, parked on, or parked too close to tracks.

Accidents While Passing:

Preventable if:

- Driver passed while view of the road was obstructed by hill, curve, vegetation, traffic, adverse weather conditions, etc.
- Driver attempted to pass in the face of closely approaching traffic.
- Driver failed to signal change of lanes.
- Driver pulled out in front of other traffic overtaking from the rear.
- Driver cut in short returning to the lane.

Accidents While Being Passed:

Preventable if:

- Driver failed to stay in his/her own lane and hold speed or reduce it to permit safe passing.

Accidents While Entering Traffic Stream:

Preventable if:

- Driver failed to signal when pulling out from curb.
- Driver failed to check traffic before pulling out from curb.
- Driver failed to look back to check traffic if he/she was in a position where mirrors did not show traffic conditions.
- Driver attempted to pull out in a manner which forced other vehicles to change speed or direction.

- Driver failed to make full stop before entering from side street, alley, or driveway.
- Driver failed to make full stop before crossing sidewalk.
- Driver failed to yield right of way to approaching traffic.

Pedestrian Traffic:

Preventable if:

- Driver did not reduce speed in area of heavy pedestrian traffic.
- Driver was not prepared to stop.
- Driver failed to yield right of way to pedestrian.

Mechanical Defects Accident:

Preventable if:

- Defect was of a type which driver should have detected it during a pre-trip inspection or early into driving of vehicle.

All Types of Accidents:

Preventable if:

- Driver was not operating at a speed consistent with existing conditions of road, weather, or traffic.

MISCELLANEOUS

The following are miscellaneous items that will be provided by Transportation management staff:

- Board policy books and transportation handbooks will be placed at all Transportation buildings.
- Telephone lines for driver use in emergencies will be provided at Transportation buildings.

TRANSPORTATION RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Rules and Regulations printed on the following pages are necessary in order to assure a smooth, efficient operation within the Transportation department. It is expected that all employees will follow these Rules and Regulations. The information contained in the previous "General Information" section as well as all traffic rules and federal and state regulations shall be considered an extension of these Rules and Regulations. The policies and procedures described herein may be modified or discontinued at any time at the discretion of HCDE. If Transportation Policy conflicts with Board Policy, Board Policy takes precedence. If Board Policy conflicts with federal and/or state law, the law takes precedence.

Employees are expected to read Board Policies, which are published on the HCDE website found at the following link: https://www.hcde.org/about_us/school_board/board_policy

Employees may access laws and regulations regarding student transportation as well as the use and driving of school buses as published on Tennessee State government website and found at the following link: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/safety/transportation/Student-Transportation-Laws.pdf

Supervisory personnel are charged with the responsibility of seeing that all Rules and Regulations are followed. Failure to carry out directives, either written or verbal, given by supervisory personnel is insubordination. Insubordination is defined as refusal to obey an order which a supervisor is entitled to give and have obeyed. In the event that an employee does not follow a rule or regulation, disciplinary measures will depend on the seriousness of the offense, as well as take into account previous infractions or warnings. Disciplinary measures may include a verbal warning, a written reprimand, suspension, a recommendation for dismissal, or other measures as deemed necessary. Insubordination may result in termination after the first offense. Also included in this category is willful neglect of known duties and responsibilities.

GENERAL

- Unlawful possession, use, or distribution of non-prescription drugs or intoxicants, except those prescribed by a licensed physician, is prohibited while on duty. Prescription drugs that cause drowsiness or impair reflexes must not be taken prior to driving a school bus. The illegal use of drugs, the use of alcohol, or attending work under the influence of alcohol or drugs during work hours on Board of Education property will not be tolerated and are grounds for termination.
- Transportation of unauthorized persons is not permitted. Only approved assigned students and Board of Education personnel authorized to ride the bus may be transported.
- It is the responsibility of the driver and driver assistant to keep his/her address and telephone number up-to-date with the Transportation department.
- Transportation staff shall be prohibited from soliciting sales of products or services to or through students or their families during working hours. Conducting personal business or advertising products using Board of Education material (i.e., phones, copy machines, faxes, etc.) is prohibited.
- At all times, the bus driver is required to maintain a valid, non-restricted commercial driver's license with the required endorsements for the vehicle required by his/her job assignment. Loss of license may be grounds for termination.
- A bus driver who fails to take the necessary training and, as a result, causes his/her license to be downgraded will be suspended without pay until the situation is corrected. If the employee does not attempt to rectify the situation, the employee will be subject to discharge.

- Any driver guilty of a moving traffic violation will be disciplined accordingly.
- Bus drivers are responsible for picking up paper and trash in their bus.
- Bus drivers are responsible for washing their bus as needed.
- Bus drivers are not permitted to display any visible signs, decals, or materials that promote political parties, slogans, or statements (e.g., Confederate flag decals, etc.).

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION AND DISCIPLINE

- The driver shall be on the bus when the students are boarding the bus.
- No student will be discharged after boarding the bus in the morning until the bus arrives at the school. Written permission from the principal and parent to drop the student off at a bus stop other than the student's designated stop will be honored in the afternoon if space allows.
- Magnet school students will not have home stops. Stops for magnet students will be at other schools or designated locations. For any questions, the bus driver should contact the immediate supervisor.
- If a student has been suspended from the bus, yet shows up at the bus stop, the driver will transport the student to the school and accompany the student to the principal's office.
- At no time should a driver refuse to transport a student from school unless directed to do so by the Transportation Manager.
- If a student is uncontrollable while riding the bus (e.g., fighting, being loud or abusive, suspected of having a weapon, drugs, alcohol, etc.), the driver should notify the Dispatcher via their supplied radio so the student can be removed. If no radio is available, the driver should pull the bus to a safe location; only after securing the bus, the driver should call the Transportation department to report the situation then await assistance. Students that are merely disorderly will be transported and normal discipline procedures followed.
- Where possible, it is best to take the student to his/her stop in the afternoon and turn the student in to the principal the next morning.
- No student will be removed off the school bus at school or en route without first notifying a teacher, principal, orsupervisor.

ROUTES

- The Transportation department will operate transportation services in the most safe, efficient, and cost effective manner as possible.
- The Transportation department will develop all bus routes, which will include the time allotted for completion of the specific route assignment. Changes to the routes should be expected during each term, especially on special needs routes.
- Safety is a factor in determining where a bus stop shall be located.
- Total times (starting and ending) will not be changed by the bus driver without approval from the routing staff or the Transportation Manager. If the supervisor agrees that changes are needed, he/she will reevaluate and incorporate any indicated changes necessary. Otherwise, each driver will follow the specific route assignment without any deviations. Extra time will be allotted if road construction, accidents, or severe weather increases the driver's time.

- Drivers shall have a copy of their current bus schedule on their bus at all times. Buses shall run on schedule at the time designated at each bus stop. At no time will buses deviate from scheduled routes or leave earlier than the approved time on the written schedule.
    - Unless authorized, no driver will drive through private property, commercial property, residential property, subdivisions, or parking lots in order to make his/her run shorter or to avoid traffic signals or other situations.
    - Unscheduled stops at non-designated locations, such as stores, restaurants, banks, and other unauthorized areas, are not permitted unless approved in advance by the routing staff and/or the Transportation Manager. Drivers found at unauthorized areas without permission will be disciplined.
    - If a bus runs late due to the driver's negligence (e.g., lost keys, oversleeping, etc.), the driver will be subject to disciplinary action and/or fined (if contract driver).

LEAVE AND/OR ABSENCES

- Contract bus drivers are responsible for acquiring substitute drivers from the approved substitute driver eligibility roster maintained by the Transportation department. As stated in the bus driver contract, only drivers listed on the eligibility rosters shall perform transportation services for the school system.
- Employed drivers reporting back to work after being absent due to illness for three (3) or more consecutive days may be required to have a doctor's statement. They should also contact their Dispatcher to verify their assignment before returning to work. When questionable circumstances arise, an employee may be required to provide a doctor's statement, even if the employee has been out less than three (3) consecutivedays. Abuse of the sick leave policy is not fair to the other workers that are diligent in their attendance. *(See Board Policy 5.302 (Sick Leave) for more information.)*
- Employees and contracted drivers are expected to arrive to work on time for buses to run on schedule. A pattern of excessive tardiness may result in disciplinary action.

DAILY DUTIES

- Driver must perform a pre-trip inspection in the AM and a post-trip inspection in the PM and submit inspection results via a Daily Vehicle Inspection Report form. The Vehicle Inspection Report is to be signed and dated, indicating completion of the inspection and recording any deficiencies found. (Contract drivers must turn in forms every week to Transportation.)
- Drivers are responsible for seeing that their bus maintains an adequate amount of fuel at all times.
- All personal articles, such as books and clothing, left on the bus are to be turned in to the school office if not claimed by the student within two (2) days. NEVER throw away articles left on the bus.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Physical examinations are to be completed by the dates established by the Transportation department. The cost of the physical examination is the employee's responsibility. The Board reserves the right to require, at its expense, re-examination at any time. *(See Board Policy 3.405 (Owner/Operator Bus Service) for more information.)*
- Drug and alcohol training must be attended as scheduled by the Transportation department.

- All CDL drivers are subject to random drug and alcohol testing. Any refusal of random selection will result in an automatic "failure" status that will result in termination and will be reported to the federal clearing house.

EQUIPMENT

- It is the responsibility of the independent contractor or bus company to prepare and submit requests for vehicle repairs. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the driver/assistant to prepare and submit requests for special needs equipment repairs. These reports are to be submitted to the Transportation department immediately. Unnecessary abuse of equipment or failure to maintain reasonable preventive maintenance and cleanliness will result in disciplinary actions. The offense of bus neglect resulting in serious damage or injury shall be cause for termination.
- Cameras, radios, and Zonar should be in working order at all times. If repairs are needed, a request for immediate attention should be made to the Transportation department.
- Two-way radios are provided for emergency purposes only (e.g., notification of problems, breakdowns, etc.). ***Unnecessary or malicious use of the radio is prohibited.***

SAFETY

- Speed limits must be obeyed as follows:
  - Rural streets not to exceed posted speed limit.
  - Highway and interstate not to exceed 55 mph.
  - Service Center or substation parking lot not to exceed 5 mph.
- A driver should always drive in a safe manner and always practice defensive driving techniques.
- The bus should never be left unattended with the engine running at any location.
- While loading and unloading students, regardless of location, the STOP sign must be out and driver must direct the students as to when to cross the street in front of the bus. Students are **NEVER** allowed to cross the street from the rear of the bus. Loading zones at schools may require individual direction from the Transportation Manager unless otherwise directed by police and/or the school crossing guard.
- The door is to be kept closed when the bus is in motion and students are on the bus.
- The school system is **NOT LIABLE** for loss of or damage to personal vehicles.
- Due to the extreme danger that exists for students in and near areas where vehicles are dispatched, buses will **NOT** be permitted to load or unload students at the Dispatch Centers.
- No eating or drinking is permitted on the school bus by students, drivers, mechanics, and driver assistants while students are on the bus.
- **NO SMOKING or Vaping** will be permitted on the school bus at any time. ***Smoking and Vaping are NOT allowed on any HCDE campus.***
- A driver shall not pass or pull alongside another bus while either bus is transporting students on the route. The right lane should be utilized unless it is obstructed or when making an immediate left turn.
- When it is necessary to utilize a backup turnaround on a busy roadway, the driver shall back from the main road onto a secondary road or driveway. Of course, due caution must be observed in order to make certain the area to the rear of the bus is clear for backing. If possible, the driver should use a non-student spotter on the ground or a spotter in the rear of the bus.

- All bus drivers and substitutes are required to complete a daily pre-trip safety inspection of their school bus. All bus assistants are required to conduct a daily pre-trip inspection of the inside of their bus.
- No driver shall operate a school bus as defined by TCA § 55-8-101(53) on any highway while using a hand-held mobile telephone while such vehicle is in motion and such vehicle is transporting students.
- A driver must check his/her bus for sleeping students after each route tier.
- ***NO ONE other than school students are allowed on the bus.*** As defined by TCA §49-6-2008, *"Persons improperly on school premises or buses. (a) In order to maintain the conditions and atmosphere suitable for learning, no person shall enter onto school buses, or during school hours, enter upon the grounds or into the buildings of any school, except students assigned to that bus or school, the staff of the school, parents of students and other persons with lawful and valid business on the bus or school premises. (b) Any person improperly on the premises of a school shall depart on the request of the school principal or other authorized person. (c) A violation of subsection (a) is a Class A misdemeanor. (d) In addition to any criminal penalty provided by law, there is created a civil cause of action for an intentional assault upon educational personnel by any person during school hours or during school functions, if the parties are on school grounds or in vehicles owned, leased or under contract by the LEA and used for transporting students or faculty. A person who commits such assault shall be liable to the victim for all damages resulting from the assault, including compensatory and punitive damages. Upon prevailing, a victim shall be entitled to three (3) times the amount of the actual damages and shall be entitled to reasonable attorney fees and costs."*
- All bus drivers approaching railroad tracks **MUST** have emergency flashers on (not amber lights) and stop at a point **NO CLOSER** than 15 feet from the tracks. Drivers should stop and look both ways before proceeding.
    - If flashers and bells continue to flash and ring after a prudent period of time with no train in sight, drivers should use extreme caution before crossing tracks.
    - If the bus should stall on railroad tracks or crossings, all students on the bus must be IMMEDIATELY EVACUATED to a safe place approximately 200 feet from the tracks. If a telephone is available, call 423-498-5555 immediately to notify the Transportation department of the situation. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will a driver remain on the bus with students in an attempt to start the bus.

SPECIAL BEHAVIOR

- Possession of weapons (i.e., firearms, explosives, explosive weapons, bowie knife, hawk bill knife, ice pick, dagger, sling shot, leaded cane, switch blade knife, blackjack, knuckles, or any other weapon of any kind) are prohibited and grounds for dismissal.
- Any attempt to defraud the Board of Education or its employees is prohibited and grounds for dismissal.
- Rude, abusive, and/or vulgar language to students, school personnel, or supervisors is prohibited and will be dealt with on an individual basis. It is the responsibility of the bus driver and bus assistant to maintain a professional attitude at all times.
- Fighting, wrestling, and other forms of personal violence while on Board of Education property or during work hours is prohibited and grounds for dismissal.
- ***Misuse of radio or disruption of communication is prohibited.***
- The general safety of students, employees, and the public is to be guarded at all times. Any negligence which endangers others will not be tolerated and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- There shall be no personal use of School Board property.

SUMMARY OF OFFENSES/DISCIPLINARY ACTION(S)

Disciplinary action(s) will be proportional to the seriousness of the offense(s). It is always the goal to be consistent in disciplinary matters; however, no two situations are ever exactly alike in all particulars. Past disciplinary problems and evaluations will also be taken into account. Continued disciplinary offenses may result in recommendation for termination.

Most non-serious first offenses will result in a verbal warning or reprimand. Subsequent violations of the same regulation or a different regulation will result in a written warning or reprimand. Further violations could result in a disciplinary hearing.

Serious offenses, however, such as preventable accidents resulting in serious damage or injury, breaches of safety, unreported accidents, insubordination, etc., may result in a disciplinary hearing leading to suspension without pay or termination.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Per the HCDE Responsible Use Policy, "the line between professional life and personal life must be clear at all times. Staff members should only use their educational email account or other approved communication method (Google, Edmodo, etc.) to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians, and should only communicate on matters directly related to education. Relationships associated with such educational social media accounts should only be with members of the educational community, such as administrators, teachers, students, and parent of such students. It is strongly recommended that staff reject requests from individuals who do not fit into these categories."

Transportation staff should reference the Responsible Use Policy for any needed clarification and to ensure they remain familiar with the most recent updates to this policy.

TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Per TCA §49-6-2101, the Hamilton County Board of Education may provide school transportation facilities for students who live over one and one-half (1.5) miles by the nearest accessible route for middle/high schools and one (1) mile for elementary schools to which they are assigned by the Board and in transportation facilities for students who live less than one and one-half (1.5) miles by the nearest accessible route from the school in which they are enrolled. (State funds are not received for students transported less than one and one-half (1.5) miles.)

Students living within the legal boundaries of Hamilton County, Tennessee, who are legally enrolled in Hamilton County Schools, shall be eligible for transportation according to the following conditions and categories.

ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS AND CATEGORIES FOR BUS TRANSPORTATION

- **Elementary Schools** – Students who live one (1) mile or more from school of attendance. Safety may dictate an exception to this rule.
- **Middle and High Schools** – Students who live one and one-half (1.5) miles or more from school of attendance. Safety may dictate an exception to this rule.
- Additional bus route service to non-eligible areas may be added as funds are available for this service as approved by the Board.
- **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Transportation** – Students electing to attend the paired school through the NCLB program will be provided with transportation from assigned pick-up points in their feeder base zone. Additional regulations on this service are contained in the out-of-zone policy provision.
- **Exceptional Education Students** – Transportation of exceptional education students living within the boundaries of the county-wide classes will be approved on an individual basis. Not all students enrolled or eligible for enrollment will be transported.
- **Federal Programs Transportation** – Students enrolled in educational programs partially or totally funded by federal funds and whose program of services includes the providing of transportation may be transported at the expense of the program.
- **Students Receiving Special Health and Dental Services from Agencies in Hamilton County** – Such transportation services shall be on an individual basis and only as authorized for specific and required needs.
- The actual distance for eligibility shall be determined as follows:
    - From the center of the driveway of the student's home, where it intersects the public thoroughfare (in the event no driveway exists on this thoroughfare, the center of the student's home where it would intersect with the thoroughfare will be the determining boundary), and along the nearest public route (meaning public vehicular thoroughfare).
    - All apartment complexes, trailer courts, public housing projects, etc., will be measured from the closest entrance drive of said complexes, etc., to a point where the school bus normally discharges its passengers at the school.

STUDENT RULES OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Rules of conduct have been developed to provide a safe and pleasant environment for students while being transported. Transportation is an elective provided by the Board, and failure to comply with any of the rules will be grounds for excluding a student from riding a bus.

Students are expected to adhere to the Hamilton County Schools Student Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline: https://allen.hcde.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=30805213.

Rules of Conduct:

1. Students shall be at the bus stop at the scheduled time. The bus schedule does not allow additional time to wait for those students who are tardy.
2. Students will stand a safe distance from the flow of traffic at the bus stop and wait until the bus door is open before moving toward the bus. They shall not play on highways or streets.
3. While the bus is loading or unloading, students shall enter or leave the bus promptly and in an orderly manner.
4. While riding the bus, students shall be under the supervision of the driver/assistant and shall obey the driver/assistant at all times.
5. Students shall conduct themselves in such a manner that they will not disturb other riders on the bus or distract the attention of the bus driver. The use of abusive or obscene language is strictly prohibited at all times. Students are not permitted to bring weapons of any kind, pets, or other living animals on the bus.
6. Students shall not tamper with any of the safety devices such as door latches and fire extinguishers.
7. Students shall not shout or make gestures toward anyone outside the bus.
8. Students shall not extend their hands, arms, head, or any other part of their body through the window.
9. Students shall not deface or litter the bus. They shall not write on the bus, damage seats, or throw paper, food, or other objects on the floor of the bus, nor from the bus. Unnecessary abuse of the school bus by a pupil (e.g., cut seats, broken glass, etc.) will result in the pupil becoming ineligible for transportation. Said pupil shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damages and assurances given that the abuse will not recur.
10. Food, gum, and drinks may not be consumed or chewed on the bus.
11. Smoking and vaping are not permitted.
12. Students shall keep aisles of the bus clear in order to admit passage in the aisle.
13. Students shall not ask the driver to let them off the bus at any other place except their regular stop without written permission signed by the principal.
14. Students who must cross the road or highway to enter the bus must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver has signaled them to cross in front of the bus.
15. Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus in the afternoon shall go to a point on the shoulder of the road ten (10) feet in front of the bus and cross the road only after the driver has signaledfor them to cross.
16. The driver/assistant has the authority to assign a student a seat when it becomes necessary for disciplinary reasons.

Disciplinary Procedures:

Students who endanger and/or harm other students while being transported may warrant suspension of riding privileges for the remainder of the year. Students suspended through the end of a school year will require a meeting with the principal, driver, and Transportation Manager before being re-admitted onto the bus. Whenever a bus, for disciplinary reasons, is required to return back to school, or help is requested by the driver

over the radio or by other means, the offense is considered major and subject to suspension of the offending party or parties. Whenever a bus is returned to school, there will be an investigation to determine the cause. If the bus is generally disruptive, with no one or even a small group of students readily identifiable as the instigators, all student riders will be warned that future disruptions will cause all riders to be denied bus service for the next day after the second disruption. After an incident where a bus has to return to school, a Dispatcher will meet with the driver to review and investigate the occurrence and to make recommendations for future improvements. Any incident that involves the breaking of a law, including vandalism of the bus, is always considered a major offense.

The principals and the Transportation Manager will enforce the disciplinary procedures outlined below for major and/or minor offenses. No exceptions will be made as to the enforcement of the discipline noted above unless the school determines that a harsher penalty is more appropriate. The responsibility for sending the letters and setting up the parent conferences will rest with the school. Every referral after the first one shall be sent to the parents by the school through the mail. Principals shall act on referrals within 24 hours to preclude a problem from getting worse before some action is taken. Each school shall provide a designated slot at the location of the teacher mailboxes for referrals. One driver at each site will be designated to daily pick up all referrals at that site and take them to the Dispatcher that day.

The Transportation Manager can refuse to transport a student that is considered a threat (danger, risk, hazard, etc.) to the safety of the other students, driver, and assistant.

Driver/Assistant Responsibilities:

1. Inform the student of the violation.
2. Conduct an individual conference with the student.
3. Assign a seat to the student (if necessary).
4. Report referrals to the principal on the appropriate disciplinary form. Complete all copies of the form and deliver to the principal or representative, maintaining a copy for the driver's records to use as follow-up with the principal. After receiving the yellow copy of the disciplinary form back from the principal, make appropriate notations and turn in the form to the Dispatcher.
5. When returning to the school for disciplinary help, drivers will be required to identify the disruptive student(s). Appropriate school staff should remove the student from the bus and notify the student's parent/guardian to pick up the student. The student will be suspended as per major offense guidelines.
6. Do not give students snacks (e.g., candy, gum, drinks etc.) at any time.

Principal's Responsibilities:

1. The principal is ordinarily responsible for discipline administered due to misconduct of students riding school buses. When the principal receives both copies of the disciplinary form from the driver, the principal should take the appropriate disciplinary action and note such action on the disciplinary form. The disciplinary action could include letters to parents, setting up parent conferences, or suspension from the bus depending on the number of or seriousness of the offense(s). The principal should then return the white copy to the driver.
2. It is recommended that the principal or his/her representative remain at the school thirty (30) minutes after dismissal. This person will handle discipline if buses return to school and provide student information in the event of a bus accident.

3. Principals are to be provided with a typed student list 20 days after the start of school with student names, addresses, telephone numbers (home and work numbers), and assigned bus numbers.

OPERATING PROCEDURES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

The following procedures shall be followed in determining the closing of schools when snow or inclement weather prohibits the transporting of students on school buses.

- The Transportation Manager with other Transportation staff shall determine the condition of roads in all school zones. After checking with the U. S. Weather Bureau, the Transportation Manager will report his/her findings and recommendations to the Deputy Superintendent no later than 5:00 AM.
- A final status check of road conditions will be made frequently between 4:00 and 4:30 AM.
- The Superintendent or designee will make a determination regarding school closing and notify necessary staff and media no later than 5:00 AM.
- On inclement weather days, appropriate notification will be given to the news media. A call will be placed to all student households and staff members advising of the school closure and if School Age Child Care is open or closed. Parents should also be instructed to listen for the appropriate announcement via television and radio to plan accordingly.
- When changing weather conditions necessitate early dismissal of school, public announcements and emergency calls to student homes will be made a minimum of one hour prior to school closing.
- All extracurricular activities (including practices) are to be canceled.
- Principals should explain to students and parents that, on inclement weather days when students are dismissed early due to snow, ice, flooding, etc., school buses will carry students as close as practical (in the judgment of the bus driver) to their home stop. Buses will not operate on steep hills, dangerous curves, dead end roads, etc.

SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION

ROUTE/BUS ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Students are placed on routes that are designed to maintain safety for all students as well as minimize the length of time for each route. Total riding time should not exceed one and one-half (1.5) hours, morning or afternoon.

BUS STOPS

- Bus stops are set at the student's address whenever possible. The bus will arrive both morning and afternoon at the driveway entrance of the street address where possible. Parents are required to bring the student to the bus or observe the student as they approach or leave the bus.
    - Parents may choose two locations (one for AM and one for PM) as long as they are consistent daily.
    - Safety is a factor in determining where a bus stop shall be located.
- Students will not be allowed off the bus in the afternoon if there is no one at home, except where the prior permission has been granted through the student's Transportation Order as determined through the Special Needs Department.
- Two (2) attempts will be made to bring students home in the afternoon. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the Chattanooga Police Department (423-698-2525) or Hamilton County Sheriff's Office (423- 622-0022) will be contacted to take custody of the student. If necessary, the Department of Human Servicesin Hamilton County, Child Protective Services (423-266-0162), will also be contacted.
    - They will be responsible for notifying parent/guardian of the student('s/s') location. It is important that the parent/guardian keep the school updated of any address and/or telephone numbers changes, including changes in home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, etc.
- Stops are to be made at the approximate time as indicated on the route. Student(s) should be prepared to board the bus five minutes prior to their approximate route pick up time. Parent/guardian assistance in this will also reduce the route riding time for all students in order to arrive at school on time.
    - Buses will wait up to three (3) minutes for students to board, as long as road conditions allow for safe delay. If the driver arrives on time at morning stop(s) and student(s) are not ready, the driver should not wait longer than three (3) minutes before continuing on the route. The driver will notify the Dispatcher by two-way radio when this occurs. There will not be a second attempt to pick up student(s) on the day this occurs.

MEDICATION

No school official or teacher will routinely dispense prescription medication to students except in unique situations in which a student's health is dependent upon long-term medication (i.e., Ritalin) or emergency medication (i.e., Benadryl). If under these circumstances, a student is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal or the principal's designee will administer the medication. (Bus drivers and/or bus driver assistants are not approved toadminister medications.)

ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE CHANGES

Parents/guardians will report any changes of address and telephone numbers immediately to the student's school. The school will notify the Exceptional Education department.

Changes of address may require five (5) working days to reschedule the student's Special Needs transportation. Parents will be notified by the bus driver of any new route information resulting from any address change. Transportation will not be provided until the school, parent/guardian, and driver are notified of the approved address change or addition to a route.

The parent/guardian is responsible for transportation of the student to and from school until the change is approved and rescheduled on a route.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Special Needs Transportation staff will not reveal any information about a special needs student to anyone other than the parent/guardian and HCDE employees as deemed necessary.

Transportation will not share information with daycare centers, friends, neighbors, etc. regarding a student's behavior on the bus, in the classroom, or in conversations overheard and/or discussed in a group.

Special Needs Drivers and Assistants have signed Confidentiality Agreements to disclose personally identifiable information to appropriate HCDE employee(s) and/or designee(s) with a specific need to know as deemed necessary.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

If a special needs student will be absent, the Transportation department requests that the parent/guardian notify the Dispatcher at 423-498-7320. If the student will be out of school for more than three (3) days, the Transportation department will discontinue the student's stop until the parent/guardian notifies the Dispatcher with a date to resume transportation services for the student.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Parents/guardians are not permitted to ride the bus to and from school. Parents/guardians are to refrain from supervising or interfering with Transportation staff regarding problems encountered on the bus. Interference could result in personal liability.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

All staff and students must maintain an acceptable level of personal cleanliness. Student(s) will not be permitted on the bus if clothes and/or person is soiled with body waste. Schools will be responsible for seeing that this condition is corrected before loading the student on the bus in the afternoon. Perfumes must be avoided due to the sensitivity of others, as some are made physically ill by strong scents and smells.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

- Special needs students are encouraged to ride regular bus routes whenever possible. They shall adhere to regular school bus rules when doing so.

- Some special needs students may require a combination of regular and special routes. Such arrangements are the responsibility of the Transportation Manager.

- Special needs students riding regular buses may receive some special attention with regard to individualized seating, loading and unloading precautions, a "big brother/sister" to assist, etc. These adaptations are the responsibility of the Transportation Manager, the respective school principal(s), and the concerned bus driver(s).
- The actual routing of special needs buses is the responsibility of the Transportation Manager. Any adjustments, additions, or deletions of said routes shall be jointly planned and made known to all concerned (e.g., principal, parent/guardian, Transportation Manager, etc.).
- The special needs student's parent/guardian and/or teacher must be present at all times when loading and unloading the student in the mornings and afternoons with the exception of approved permitted unsupervised drop-offs.
- When a special needs student(s) requires a lift for loading and unloading, the parent/guardian should remain five (5) feet from the lift when it is in motion.
- Students will not be permitted to board a bus if their behavior is considered by the driver to be an endangerment to the student and/or other passengers in the bus. When the student's behavior changes and his/her behavior is no longer an endangerment, the student will be transported.
- If a special needs student's behavior necessitates, he/she may be temporarily removed from a special route. If the situation is not corrected, the removal may be permanent and other means of transportation may be necessary.
- In the case of emergencies on special routes (either a mechanical breakdown or difficulty with a student), the Dispatcher, Transportation Manager, and the respective school principal shall be immediately notified. The driver/assistant shall not leave students alone in the vehicle.
- While riding the bus, students shall be under the supervision of the driver and/or assistant and shall obey them at all times.
- Students shall conduct themselves in such a manner that does not distract the attention of the bus driver or disturb other riders on the bus. Students must obey the rules posted on the bus at all times.
- The use of abusive or obscene language is prohibited at all times.
- Students shall not bring knives, sharp objects, firearms, animals, or radios on the bus.
- Students will wear seat belts at all times while being transported.
- Students shall not shout or make gestures toward anyone inside or outside the bus.
- Students shall not tamper with any of the bus's safety devices, such as emergency exits, fire extinguishers, radios, etc.
- Students shall not put their hands, arms, head, or bodies out of the windows.
- Students shall not deface or litter the bus. They shall not write on the bus, damage seats, or throw paper, food, or other objects on the floor of the bus or from the bus. Unnecessary abuse of a school bus by a student, such as cutting seats and breaking windows, will result in that student being ineligible for transportation. Said students shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damages and assurances are given that the abuse will not reoccur.
- Special needs drivers cannot request that students be picked up before school bell times in the afternoon.

- Neither food nor drinks may be consumed on the bus.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol, vaping, or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- Students shall keep aisles of the bus clear of books, lunches, coats, and feet.
- One (1) band instrument and/or one (1) book bag hall be permitted on the bus if they can be held on the student's lap or stored on the floor beside the student's feet. For safety purposes, instruments, equipment, or other objects will not block aisles or emergency exits. Instruments, equipment, or other objects will not be left in the driver's area. If there is a question about a certain instrument, equipment, or object, the bus driver shall make the decision as to whether it may be transported; however, no students will be denied transportation. If an object considered too large is brought on the bus, the student will be told that the object cannot be transported. The driver should use reasonable judgment in making safety decisions asto whether a large object should be transported on the bus. If some question or controversy arises, the busdriver should contact the immediate supervisor.
- If a special needs student is mainstreamed on a regular bus, the following shall apply to students who must cross the road or highway to board a bus:
    - If student arrives at the stop just as the bus approaches the stop, he/she shall wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver has signaled for him/her to cross in front of the bus.
    - Parents/guardians will bring the student to the bus and pick the student up on the loading door side of the bus. If the parent/guardian is not available, the assistant will help the student across the street.
    - Transportation of siblings not classified as exceptional education students are not permitted to ride special needs buses.