

DALLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES
2010 – 2011

2010 – 2011 DCS TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT.....	1
TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES.....	1
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS.....	1
CRIMINAL HISTORY CRITERIA.....	2
ASSIGNMENT OF BUSES.....	2
BUS ROUTE AND TRIP ASSIGNMENTS.....	2
ATTENDANCE BONUS PROGRAM.....	6
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT.....	6
APPROPRIATE DRESS AND GROOMING.....	9
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.....	10
ACCIDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE.....	11
VIDEO TAPE GUIDELINES.....	14
HANDLING STUDENT BEHAVIOR.....	16
STUDENT SAFETY AND UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL BUS SEAT BELTS.....	19
DRIVER/MONITOR INTERACTIONS.....	20
BUS MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION.....	21
REPORTS.....	22
MISCELLANEOUS SAFETY PROCEDURES.....	23
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE TRANSFER PROCEDURES.....	25

DCS TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Dallas County Schools (“DCS”) is the 5th largest student transportation fleet in the United States. Operating a fleet of over 1650 buses, DCS transports approximately 70,000 children safely each day. All buses are housed at DCS' service centers.

DCS buses travel over 20 million miles annually to provide regular, special education, and extracurricular transportation to students in Dallas County and throughout the State of Texas. In addition, DCS provides transportation for the State of Texas in emergency situations.

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

All transportation employees work in the Transportation Department under the authority of the head of that Department. The head of the Transportation Department's authority is delegated through appropriate personnel at each service center, including the Director of Fleet Maintenance, Area Director, Shop Foreman, Supervisor(s), Secretary, and Dispatchers.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures have been adopted by DCS Administration to ensure safe and efficient transportation service. Although these procedures are not official Policy as adopted by the Board, transportation employees are expected to follow these procedures and may be disciplined for the failure to do so. These procedures serve as expectations, examples and models used by the Transportation Department to carry out the day-to-day responsibility of student bus transportation. These procedures and guidelines do not cover every aspect of an employee's responsibilities and may not address all laws, regulations and rules applicable to the operation of student bus transportation. Transportation employees are responsible for following all DCS Policies, procedures and Employee Handbook guidelines. Any questions about employment expectations or responsibilities should be discussed with an employee's supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

- 1) Bus Driver Eligibility Requirements - See DCS Policy § 10.002, Employment Requirements for School Bus Drivers
- 2) Minimum Driving Record Qualifications for School Bus Drivers
 - a) Any driver who accumulates 10 or more penalty points according to the standards set by the Texas Department of Public Safety is prohibited from transporting students until such time as his or her driving record qualifies for such

duty. A driver prohibited from transporting students under this paragraph is subject to termination.

CRIMINAL HISTORY CRITERIA

See DCS Policy §§ 11.007 & 11.008.

ASSIGNMENT OF BUSES

(See also DCS Policy § 11.013)

- 1) The area director at each service center is responsible for the school bus assignments to each route. This may be carried out by a supervisor and dispatcher with the area director's approval.
- 2) Buses are assigned to routes every year before the beginning of each school year and before the route selection by the drivers. This is subject to change during the school year as deemed necessary. Buses are assigned to routes and not drivers.
- 3) The most traveled bus routes will receive priority over the least traveled bus routes in determining the bus assigned to the route. This is subject to change during the school year as deemed necessary. Driver seniority is not a factor for bus assignments.
- 4) The head of the Transportation Department will assign newly purchased buses to the various service centers upon the bus' arrival.
- 5) Before a new bus assignment is made to the route, the area director must provide the head of the Transportation Department with a list of the recommended bus replacements and new route bus assignments.
- 6) Decisions for bus retirements shall be made by the Director of Fleet Maintenance.

BUS ROUTE AND TRIP ASSIGNMENTS

(See also DCS Policy §§ 11.014, 11.015 & 12.016)

1) Regular Route Assignment Process

- a) At the beginning of each new school year, all routes will be posted in advance of the route selection day.
- b) Route postings will list the pick-up points, drop-off points, starting time, estimated total daily hours and bus assignment.
- c) On the route selection day, route selections will be conducted based on seniority.

- d) A driver with 10 or more years of service, who is unavailable on the route selection day, may phone ahead and, upon approval by a supervisor, may request a route before it is made available to drivers with less seniority. The driver must sign-up for the reserved route in person at the supervisor's office within 72 hours, or the route assignment is forfeited.
- e) Drivers may bid/select a route based on length of route, bus assignment, schools served or facility.
- f) Any driver who does not possess a current and valid certification, commercial driver's license or physical exam documentation on the route selection day will not be allowed to participate in the selection process or reserve a route.
- g) Routes that may not be included in the regular bid selection process may be assigned as follows:
 - i) For routes serving students with special needs that require a driver/monitor with special training or skills, the supervisor may assign the route based on interviews with drivers and/or monitors, rather than years of service.
 - ii) Certain programs and schools may not be included in the regular bid selection process. The supervisor will assign these specific programs as needed to drivers/monitors based on the proximity to existing routes (i.e. JJAEP, SAC, after-school, extended-day, mid-day, etc.)
- h) Monitors are assigned routes through the bidding process according to seniority.
- i) DCS reserves the right to cancel, add, or change route assignments at any time or to assign or reassign employees to service centers, routes, or buses in special circumstances when in the best interest of DCS and the school districts it serves. Route assignments may change if DCS determines that it is necessary to make the best use of DCS resources or to satisfy the transportation requirements of a particular student or school. Safety concerns may also require changes to existing routes. A change in route assignment may also include a change in bus assignment for a particular route.
- j) During a school year, assignment of drivers and monitors to any new routes or any existing routes that may be vacated by a driver or monitor will be made on the same basis as selections made at the beginning of that school year. A driver or monitor may switch routes during the school year a maximum of two times per semester.
- k) Substitute bus drivers and coach drivers are not assigned a route. Substitute bus drivers will be called to drive on an as-needed basis to cover routes.

2) Summer School Route Assignment Process

- a) As an incentive to reduce absenteeism and enable DCS to effectively manage its limited resources of bus drivers and monitors, drivers/monitors who have five or fewer missed days (or ten shifts) will be eligible to bid on summer school routes according to their seniority. Drivers/monitors who have missed more than five days (or ten shifts) in the current school year will only be eligible to bid on summer school routes if available, according to their seniority, after those who meet the five day (or ten shifts) attendance requirement.
- b) Jury duty, bereavement leave, assault leave, workers' compensation leave, FMLA leave, catastrophic illness leave previously approved by the Extended Leave Committee, approved professional leave, and military leave will not count as missed shifts for this purpose.

3) Extra-Curricular Trip Assignment Process

- a) Each Tuesday, extra-curricular trips for the following week will be posted for review. All trips entered before the first round of bidding begins must be posted. Trip selection will be the following day, at a time to be determined at each service center. Trips for a holiday week and the week following a holiday will be combined for selection, with drivers selecting one trip per turn from the combined list.
- b) Drivers are expected to decide before selection time which trip(s) they would like, including alternate selections, so that the selection process will go quickly. Drivers will have approximately one (1) minute to make their trip selection when their turn is called.
- c) Drivers arriving after trip selection has begun will have the opportunity to bid on the first round trips at the completion of the first round selection, before the second round begins, provided such late-comers arrive before the beginning of the second round.
- d) Bidding will close when all trips are assigned. The bidding the following week will begin with the next driver in seniority order, even if that driver accepted an add-on trip during the week. Dispatchers are to keep a call log for add-on trips and post the log regularly.
- e) If an add-on trip (any trip that is received after the final round of selection is completed for that week) is received with adequate notice, the trips dispatcher will make a reasonable effort to contact any driver whose assigned trip that week was cancelled, in seniority order. If none are available, an attempt will be made to contact the next person on the regular rotation list, then the second, and so on. If time does not allow, the trip will be announced in the break room and/or on the radio, and given to the first available driver, with the most seniority, and with less than 40 hours for that week.

- f) The number of trips per driver is not limited, but drivers are responsible for keeping their weekly hours under 40, including routes, trips, and other assignments, and for only selecting trips that do not conflict with their scheduled route. For overtime purposes, the work week is Friday through Thursday. All time over 40 hours a week must be approved in advance by a supervisor; the exception is overtime caused by trips that run over their scheduled time.
- g) Drivers eligible to bid on trips who will not be present at any bidding round may turn in a proxy selection form before selection begins. If the form is not completely and correctly filled out, it will not be used. All drivers are eligible for proxy selection. Each lot will vote on their respective proxy procedure(s).
- h) If a driver gives up a trip, it becomes open for sign-up and may not be given or “traded” to another driver. Changes to trips may only be made by the trips dispatcher or a supervisor.
- i) When a trip is cancelled before the driver’s scheduled clock-in time, the school is not charged and the driver is not paid. When a cancellation occurs after the driver’s clock-in time, the driver is paid two hours and the school is charged to cover the expense. If too many buses were ordered for a trip and a driver must be sent back, it will be the driver who signed up last for that trip. The dispatcher will make every effort to notify drivers of a cancellation ahead of time.
- j) As an incentive to reduce absenteeism and enable DCS to effectively manage its limited resources of bus drivers, an employee cannot be absent for more than two shifts during the week immediately prior to the trip selection process in order to be eligible to participate in the following week’s trip selection process. Three or more absences during a week, Monday through Friday, will cause the employee to be ineligible to participate in the trip selection process the following week.
 - i) Missing any portion of a shift, which results in a stand-by or substitute bus driver covering all or part of the shift, will count as an absence for this purpose.
 - ii) Jury duty, bereavement leave, approved professional leave, assault leave, workers’ compensation leave, FMLA leave, catastrophic illness leave previously approved by the Extended Leave Committee, and military leave will not count as missed shifts for purposes of trip selection eligibility.
- k) Driver misconduct on a trip will result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the supervisor. Any driver who cancels two (2) or more trips that they have signed up for in any one week will not be eligible to bid on trips for the following two weeks.
- l) Substitute and reserve bus drivers must cover any assigned routes in order to be eligible for rotational assignment to trips. Route-time trips will be assigned before other trips, and a substitute or reserve bus driver who fails to accept an offered

route-time trip is not eligible to participate in the rotational assignment of other trips. Coach drivers are not eligible for rotational assignment to trips, but may be assigned to drive their own teams to extra-curricular events during route times.

ATTENDANCE BONUS PROGRAM

- 1) As an incentive to reduce absenteeism and enable DCS to effectively manage its limited resources of bus drivers and monitors, DCS has implemented an Attendance Bonus Program. The Attendance Bonus Program replaced the Merit Pay Program and is based solely on an employee's attendance. The total amount of the bonus will be \$662 for drivers and \$548 for monitors, annually, which is the same amount as the former Merit Pay Program.
- 2) Attendance for purpose of this bonus is defined as not missing more than five days (ten AM or PM shifts) a year. Drivers missing any portion of an AM or PM shift, which results in a stand-by or substitute bus driver covering all or part of the shift, will count as a missed shift for this purpose.
- 3) The bonus payments will be divided into two school semesters, fall and spring, to be paid at the end of each semester in amounts of \$331 for drivers and \$274 for monitors. A driver or monitor must work the entire semester to be eligible for the full semester amount. The fall semester will be from the first day of school until the week before winter break. To be eligible for the first bonus payment of \$331, a driver or monitor must not have missed more than five days (ten AM or PM shifts) during the fall semester. The spring semester will be from the last working week of December until the last day of the school year for the district in which the employee works. To be eligible for the second bonus payment, the driver or monitor must not have missed more than five days (ten AM or PM shifts) total for that school year.
- 4) Jury duty, bereavement leave, approved professional leave, assault leave, workers' compensation leave, FMLA leave, catastrophic illness leave previously approved by the Extended Leave Committee, and military leave will not count as missed shifts for purposes of the Attendance Bonus.
- 5) Employees who begin working for DCS after the school year has started will be awarded a prorated amount of the bonus if they have the required attendance (as prorated for portion of year worked). These employees will receive a daily rate of \$3.67 for drivers or \$3.04 for monitors. This daily rate will be multiplied times the number of days worked.
- 6) Coach drivers and substitute bus drivers are not eligible for the Attendance Bonus Program.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

(See also DCS Employee Handbook - Employee Standards of Conduct)

1) Performance Standards.

All Transportation Department employees are expected to strive to maintain exemplary performance every day. Excellent drivers are acknowledged with a Shining Star Award. Exemplary performance includes the following:

- a) Safety - Performing all driving duties without accidents, tickets or formal complaints and in accordance with applicable laws, as well as DCS policy, guidelines and instructions.
- b) Attendance - Coming to work consistently and working the scheduled work shift; arranging appointments and personal business so as not to interfere with scheduled duties.
- c) Cooperation - Cooperating with parents, school districts, and DCS staff to make operations run smoothly.
- d) Attitude – Exhibiting a positive, proactive attitude and seeking solutions to problems rather than placing blame or merely complaining.
- e) Communication – Informing supervisors about conditions requiring attention and listening to parents, students, and staff regarding concerns.
- f) Contributions - Using imagination and shared thinking to resolve problems, making suggestions and working toward common goals of the department.

2) Quality Control/Complaints About Employees

Often an employee's job performance may stimulate comments from parents, students, school principals and the general public. Comments received by the Transportation Department about an employee's job performance are called "Q-Calls". The supervisor or area director will discuss Q-Calls with the employee and will take disciplinary action as needed.

3) Speeding/Unsafe Driving

A driver is expected to drive in a safe and lawful manner at all times. If DCS receives complaints of speeding or unsafe driving, the driver identified in the complaint will be notified and given an opportunity to respond to the complaints. Verified complaints are those in which the supervisor or area director can confirm through the source of the complaints. The supervisor or area director will discuss the complaint with the driver and will take disciplinary action as needed.

4) Red Light Cameras

A driver is expected to stop at all red lights as required by law. Several intersections traveled through by DCS employees contain camera equipment to detect controlled

signal violations. When a DCS school bus or vehicle license plate is captured on camera running a red light, DCS will receive a civil ticket, which in most cases is \$75. When this occurs, the service center will determine who the driver was at the time of the violation, and the fine will be forwarded to that employee for payment. The employee will also be subject to disciplinary action by DCS for the traffic violation. If the employee does not pay all money due to the respective city for the violation, DCS will pay the fine upon the second notice, and the employee will be suspended. In most cases, if the fine is not paid within a specified period of time, a penalty will be assessed, and the employee will be responsible for the penalty. The employee is encouraged to resolve their fines in a timely fashion.

5) Service Center Procedures

Employees must comply with all DCS Policies and administrative procedures, as well as any supplemental procedures and/or instructions adopted by each service center. These procedures may be department-wide or may be specific guidance for the drivers of a particular service center, such as special parking situations, fueling procedures, etc. DCS policies and procedures are available in the Employee Handbook, on the DCS website, at each service center, and from the Human Resources Department. Drivers will find procedure updates in their mailbox or posted on the bulletin board at each service center. Procedures may also be presented and discussed in monthly meetings at the service centers.

6) Guiding Principles For Bus Drivers

The principles listed below require the active daily attention of all drivers, including consistent attendance, high standards of driving, thoughtful attention to human relations and cooperation of bus drivers with other persons engaged in the educational tasks of DCS. All regulations and procedures of the Transportation Department are related to these central principles:

- a) A SAFE TRIP;
- b) EVERY TRIP RUN ON SCHEDULE;
- c) REGULAR DAILY ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE; and
- d) POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERY PERSON ON THE BUS.

7) Driver Conduct on Field Trips

- a) Lateness and/or other unprofessional behavior on field trips will not be tolerated and may result in the driver's name being removed from the field-trip assignment list.
- b) Drivers must stay with the bus at the location of the field trip unless otherwise instructed. Drivers must have the sponsor's permission to leave the field-trip site

for any reason.

- c) Drivers are responsible for fueling the bus before leaving for the field trip.
- d) Drivers must depart from the service center with sufficient time to pick up the group. Drivers may not switch groups after reaching the school.

8) Bus Monitors

- a) On some special education routes and for other special situations, a monitor may be assigned to assist the bus driver. The bus monitor's duties are regulated by applicable law, DCS Policies and procedures, the Employee Handbook, directives from the Transportation Department related to student transportation, and directions from the bus driver.
- b) Monitors shall assist bus drivers in dealing with all grade levels and special education students on the route, including student management, helping students enter and leave the bus, managing student wheelchair restraints, and assisting students with crossing streets after disembarking from the bus.
- c) If a special education bus or route is assigned a monitor, either for one student or a group of students, that monitor must be on the bus for every route. If the assigned monitor is absent, a substitute monitor should be assigned, using any available monitor, stand-by driver or an office staff member. If there is no one available to be a substitute monitor, the driver may proceed on the route if he or she feels comfortable without a monitor. If the driver does not feel comfortable driving the route without a monitor, the driver should wait until a substitute monitor is found. At this point, the school and/or parents should be notified by the dispatcher/supervisor that the bus will be late.

APPROPRIATE DRESS AND GROOMING

For the purpose of maintaining a professional appearance and the comfort of employees, employees should follow the guidelines listed below in dressing appropriately for the job of transporting students.

- 1) All clothing should fit appropriately at the waist, be neatly hemmed, and should not be too tight or too loose.
- 2) Shoes must be worn at all times while on duty and must have closed toes and heels. Heel height must not jeopardize driving safety or assisting on the bus.
- 3) Shorts may be worn but must not be too loose fitting, no biking shorts, cutoffs, boxer shorts, or combination thereof. All shorts must be hemmed or cuffed and length must be no shorter than three (3) inches above the knee.
- 4) Dresses and skirts must be no shorter than knee length.

- 5) Tank tops, tube tops, bare midriff or half shirts, halter type blouses, or mesh shirts will not be permitted. All tops will be modestly cut, front and back, with at least a two (2) inch strap for females, and no type of sleeveless shirts for males.
- 6) Visible tattoos or monogrammed items of clothing (including hats, caps, and bandannas) with provocative, drug related, alcohol or tobacco, offensive, or violent pictures or slogans, will not be permitted.
- 7) No clothing which has been torn or has holes will be allowed.
- 8) Hair on head and face must be neat, clean, and well groomed.
- 9) Appropriate undergarments must be worn.
- 10) Any combination of unacceptable clothing is not to be worn and may subject an employee to discipline.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

1) Bus Breakdowns

Any mechanical failure or other problem that impairs a driver's ability to continue the route must be immediately reported to the dispatcher. The dispatcher will provide the driver with instructions applicable to the situation. Drivers shall not abandon a bus in distress.

2) Medical Emergency

If a driver has or declares an emergency while operating a school bus, they are encouraged to contact 911 for assistance, as well as making contact with their service center to provide necessary information regarding the emergency.

3) Accident Procedures

- a) In the event of an accident, a driver's first priority is the students on the bus. The driver should care for any injuries, taking precautions to prevent further injuries, and determine whether an ambulance is needed.
- b) Students should remain on the bus if at all possible.
- c) Accidents must be reported immediately to a supervisor or dispatcher. If medical attention is required, the driver should contact 911. When the driver contacts their service center, they shall provide the following information:
 - i) Location of the accident;
 - ii) Any injuries;

- iii) Whether 911 has been called;
 - iv) Whether or not an ambulance is needed or has been dispatched;
 - v) Whether or not another bus is needed to complete the route; and
 - vi) Students on board and the school attended.
- d) Drivers must collect the following information for all other vehicles involved in the accident:
- i) license plate number;
 - ii) driver's license information;
 - iii) vehicle description;
 - iv) contact information including at least one telephone number;
 - v) name and telephone numbers of any witnesses; and
 - vi) insurance information.
- e) Police should be notified if there are any injuries or if either or both vehicles cannot be driven. If an accident occurs on a freeway, entrance ramp, exit ramp or service road, and both vehicles can be moved, the law states that the vehicles **MUST** be moved so as to avoid any traffic congestion. If the vehicles are not moved and this is the cause of another accident, a driver can be held responsible for the other accident.
- f) Accident Review (Preventable Accident/Moving Citation)
- i) The review of motor vehicle accidents is based on the concept of "Preventability" as opposed to "Fault." A "Preventable Accident" is one in which the driver failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent the accident. This is irrespective of property damage or personal injury, the extent of the loss or injury, to whom it occurred or the location of the accident.
 - ii) A driver receiving a preventability rating on an accident must undergo retraining before returning to an assigned route.
 - iii) A driver receiving a moving citation in a school bus is required to immediately report the citation to his/her respective supervisor.

ACCIDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 1) The purpose of the Accident Review Committee ("ARC") is to provide a fair and uniform process to evaluate and determine post-accident activities with the overall

objective of reducing or eliminating repeated accidents. The ARC shall review all accidents to determine the preventability of the accident and the level of compliance with DCS policies and procedures.

- 2) An accident is defined as any kind of event involving a DCS vehicle that results in any vehicle damage, bodily injury and/or property damage.
- 3) The concept of preventability is based on the premise that drivers are expected to meet a higher standard of performance than the average motorist. It is self-evident that the professional driver should be able to observe and assess the behavior of pedestrians and other drivers and recognize those actions that may create hazardous conditions and take every reasonable measure to avoid involvement in an accident.
- 4) The ARC will review the accident for defensive driving and preventability, not for legal culpability (fault). The fact that a driver, who becomes involved in a vehicle collision, is not legally at-fault does not mean the driver could not have prevented the accident.
- 5) A Defensive Driver's Profile is one who:
 - a) Commits NO driving errors.
 - b) Makes due allowance for lack of skill or improper driving practices of others.
 - c) Adjusts driving to compensate for unusual weather, road and traffic conditions.
 - d) Is not tricked into a collision by unsafe actions of pedestrians or other drivers.
 - e) Is alert to collision inducing situations.
 - f) Recognizes the need for preventative action in advance.
 - g) Takes necessary action to prevent a collision.
- 6) The overall performance of the drivers will be evaluated fairly and on a consistent basis. When a collision occurs, the following factors will be evaluated: (i) the events leading up to the collision, (ii) the causes and responsible conditions, (iii) the collision itself, and (iv) the post-collision events. Driver errors are one of the factors that will be considered. The standard that will be applied in reviewing the collision is the concept of collision preventability. The concepts of preventability and defensive driving are essential to the operation of a safe fleet.
- 7) Composition of the Committee
 - a) The ARC shall consist of five (5) committee members: Area Director, Supervisor, two (2) Drivers, and Risk Manager. The ARC Chair and only permanent committee member will be filled by the Risk Manager. The Director of Risk Management will serve as the Chair alternate. The term of the committee members shall be a full fiscal year. The driver members of the committee will be determined via a random selection process and must be from different Service Centers. Alternate drivers will also be randomly selected. The head of the

Transportation Department will determine which Transportation management staff will serve on the committee.

- b) Driver committee members must have been employed with Dallas County Schools for a minimum of three (3) years in the position of School Bus Driver, have no preventable accidents in the last three (3) years, and have current driving credentials. If while serving on the ARC, the driver committee member is involved in an accident and after their accident is heard by the committee, the accident is judged to have been “preventable”, the driver committee member will be removed from the committee, and an alternate driver will be selected to serve in their place on the ARC.

8) Responsibilities of the Accident Review Committee

- a) The ARC Chair shall be responsible for coordinating and presenting all information concerning each accident under review. The ARC Chair shall conduct the meeting and report the ARC’s finding to the driver’s Area Director.
- b) The post-accident response guidelines shall be used as a guide to determine the action to be recommended. The use of progressive discipline determines the amount of discipline based on the actions of the employee.

9) Post-Accident Progressive Response Guide

The driver’s Area Director will apply the following guide to determine the applicable progressive post-accident action:

Preventability Determination

Action

First Preventable accident within current fiscal year with or without property damage and/or injuries	Re-training, written warning.
Second Preventable accident within current fiscal year with or without property damage and/or injuries	Re-training, up to 3 days suspension without pay.
Third Preventable accident within current fiscal year with or without property damage and/or injuries	Termination
Two Preventable accidents within three years of the current accident under review and at least one of the accidents required up to 3 days suspension without pay	Re-training, 5 days suspension without pay

Three Preventable accidents within three years of the current accident under review and at least two of the accidents required up to 3 days suspension without pay	Termination
Preventable accidents where bus rear-ended other vehicle, failed to stop at a stop sign or traffic light, failed to yield, struck a pedestrian or other similar serious singular event	Progressive discipline steps may be accelerated to a more severe response level, including termination.

VIDEO TAPE GUIDELINES

- 1) Except for routine maintenance, tape exchanges or technology troubleshooting, video recordings may only be accessed at the direction of the Superintendent, General Counsel, an Assistant Superintendent, the head of the Transportation Department, the Director of Risk Management, Risk Manager, or the Service Center Area Director or Supervisor with direct management control over the bus on which the requested video was made. Authorized employees of the Fleet Maintenance and Technology Departments may be utilized as necessary to assist in video retrieval, maintenance and support of the video software and hardware.
- 2) Before a video may be viewed or released, DCS must confirm that the person or entity requesting to view or copy the video is legally entitled to view the video. A video will only be released in accordance with the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act, FERPA, and other applicable state or federal law. (See DCS Policy Chapters 19 and 26). Questions regarding who is legally entitled to view a video should be directed to the Director of Risk Management.
- 3) All actions taken and all persons involved in the viewing or copying of a video shall be noted on a Video Tracking (VT) form.
- 4) Requests by DCS Employees or School Administrators
 - a) Viewing Videos
 - i) Upon request by a bus driver, monitor or authorized school administrator to view a video regarding a specific incident on a bus, the Area Director or Supervisor will access the video from the bus in question and review it. The Area Director or Supervisor may authorize the bus driver, monitor or authorized school administrator to view the specific, relevant portion of the video when it is deemed necessary for a legitimate educational interest.

- ii) If a DCS employee other than the bus driver or monitor with a direct work connection to the incident in question requests to view a video, the Risk Management Department should be consulted.
- iii) The Area Director or Supervisor will note on the VT form whether or not the video captures a specific incident, and if so, give a general description of the incident. If the video captures a specific incident, the original videotape or a downloaded digital copy of the specific, relevant portion of the incident should be forwarded to the Risk Management Department on CD, DVD or flash drive. Video is not to be e-mailed. Once Risk Management has confirmed receipt of the video, the Service Center should destroy any copies it may have made of the video in question.

b) Copying Videos

- i) An authorized DCS employee or school administrator must submit a Video Request (VR) form to the DCS Risk Management Department in order to obtain a copy of a video. A video may only be copied for an authorized DCS employee or school administrator by the Risk Management Department.
- ii) If not already previously done by the Service Center, the Risk Management Department or its designee will retrieve the video from the bus in question, review the video, and note the incident in question on the VT form before making a copy.
- iii) Videos will be copied onto on a portable media format such as a CD or DVD and should not be emailed except in limited circumstances approved by the Superintendent, General Counsel or Director of Risk Management.

5) Requests by Members of the Public

- a) If a non-DCS employee or non-school employee requests a copy of or to view a video, that person should be directed to make their request through the appropriate school campus or by making a Public Information Act (PIA) request to the Director of Communications.
- b) Upon receipt of a PIA request, the Director of Communications will ask the Risk Management Department or its designee to retrieve the video from the bus in question, review the video, and note the incident in question on the VT form if not already previously done by the Service Center. The Risk Management Department will then make a copy for the Director of Communications.
- c) A video may only be released to a non-DCS employee or non-school employee by the Director of Communications in accordance with the PIA, FERPA and other applicable state or federal law. Video will only be released in a portable media format such as a CD or DVD and will not be e-mailed.

6) Maintaining Videos

- a) Video recordings not copied and/or downloaded for a specific cause will not be retained and/or accessible for an indefinite amount of time. The length of time video will be retained electronically and retrievable will depend on a number of factors, including but not limited to storage space available and hardware and software limitations. Requests to view and/or copy a video should be made as soon as possible to ensure the video in question is still available.
- b) The Director of Risk Management is the retaining custodian of all videos that have been pulled, downloaded and/or copied. The videos will be secured in a locked file at the DCS Administrative Office and shall not be released to any party except as allowed by law, including the Texas Public Information Act and FERPA. (See DCS Policy Chapters 19 and 26).
- c) The original VT and VR forms and any videos that have been pulled, downloaded and/or copied will be filed and kept in accordance with DCS' record retention requirements as required by the Texas Library and Archive Commission. (See DCS Policy § 26.003).

HANDLING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

(See also DCS Policy Chapter 17)

- 1) General Guidelines for drivers/monitors to encourage proper student behavior on the bus:
 - a) Maintain a clear set of rules and enforce them consistently. Students need to know where they stand. Set rules and behavior limits early and don't wait until misconduct occurs. Be fair, firm and consistent.
 - b) Let students know the reasons for the rules.
 - c) Stop undesirable behavior as soon as you see it. The longer the behavior continues, the harder it will be to stop when the behavior becomes intolerable.
 - d) When correcting students, be brief and clear. State the reason for the correction. Praise them later if the students maintain good behavior. Desired actions should be positively and specifically described (i.e., "Give Diane her book and go back to your seat," instead of "Cut it out and sit down!").
 - e) Don't belittle or ridicule students.
 - f) Expect students to maintain high standards.
 - g) Do not threaten students. Remind the students of the rules.

- h) Don't "save up" the mistakes a student makes. Work on each one as it occurs.
- i) Do not judge a student's ability by outward appearance.
- j) Treat students as individuals. Learn their names. Compliment good behavior.
- k) Be patient.
- l) Never use any type of physical force as a method of discipline.

2) School Bus Incident Reports

- a) If student misconduct continues after the driver points out the unacceptable behavior and requests that it be stopped, the driver is responsible for reporting the matter to the supervisor on the supplied DCS "School Bus Incident Report" form. This form should be used only when other remedies fail. A driver should work with a student before using the form. Examples of types of misconduct that may be reported are mentioned on the form.
- b) The "School Bus Incident Report" is printed on a two-part form. The first page is considered the original and the second page is a copy. Be specific about what the student has done. The driver should remove the white copy marked "Campus" and turn it in directly to the principal or school designee. The second page copy is to be provided to the driver's supervisor. After recording comments and stating action taken, the principal is asked to provide this report to the student's parents.
- c) "TIRES" (Transportation Incident Reporting System) is a web-based system for reporting and tracking student incident referrals used by certain districts. If utilized by your service center, specific incident reports will still be submitted by bus drivers as described above, only instead of a two-part form, it will be a single page form. The information will then be entered into the web-based system by a service center staff member, school administrators will be notified of the incident by email, and all incidents will be handled electronically instead of by paper.

3) Correcting Student Behavior – Scope and Limits

- a) Drivers/monitors shall not use any type of physical force with a student except to protect themselves, the student, or other persons from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Physical force may only be used when non-physical interventions would not be effective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others. Any physical force used under these circumstances shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm and the use of physical force in these circumstances is permitted only for as long as the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

- b) Drivers/monitors are not allowed to punish students, but may require them to sit in assigned seats in order to control behavior problems.
 - c) Drivers/monitors may not require any student to leave the bus before the student has reached his or her destination, except in extreme circumstances as allowed by DCS Policy § 17.004. However, when conditions on the bus become extremely difficult, it may be necessary for the driver to stop the bus and counsel the students until the situation is safe enough to permit finishing the route. A driver should only stop the bus in extenuating circumstances. If the route is delayed as a result, the driver should report the reason for the delay to the supervisor/dispatcher at the earliest possible time, so that the school district can respond to parents who are concerned that their students are coming home late.
 - d) Except in extreme circumstances as allowed by DCS Policy § 17.004, a student should only be discharged from a bus at his/her school or authorized stop. Drivers may, with the permission of the supervisor/dispatcher, return to the school on afternoon runs to get assistance from the school office. This is a "judgment call" which should include such factors as:
 - i) Distance from school as compared to distance to drop off area, and
 - ii) Severity of situation.
 - e) Drivers must promptly report to the principal of the school, as well as their supervisor/dispatcher, any student who attempts to carry a weapon on board a school bus.
 - f) Buses may be equipped with a video camera. With supervisor approval, the driver may request to have the tape removed or monitored in order to review student behavior issues. Moving, obscuring, disconnecting, or tampering with a bus camera or recorder in any way is prohibited.
- 4) Student Conduct (See DCS Policy § 17.002)
- a) Students must follow the student discipline guidelines of their school district any time on DCS property, including on school buses.
 - b) Students must also follow the DCS "Riders' Code of Conduct."
 - c) DCS employees observing violations of the "Riders' Code of Conduct" shall report the student and incident to the student's school.
- 5) Bus Riders' Code of Conduct (See DCS Policy § 17.003)

Bus riding is a privilege that requires responsible behavior. Certain rules of conduct are necessary for the safety of all students who ride the bus. However, some students may be unable to conduct themselves appropriately. The Bus Riders' Code of Conduct shall

be posted and prominently displayed on each school bus. Students displaying the following infractions are to be reported to the principal by the bus driver:

- a) Failure to wear a seat belt when directed or when the bus is moving (if the bus is equipped with seat belts)
- b) Improper boarding/departing procedures
- c) Bringing articles of injurious or objectionable nature aboard bus
- d) Failure to remain seated
- e) Refusing to obey driver
- f) Fighting/pushing/tripping
- g) Eating or drinking on the bus
- h) Having any part of their body outside of the window
- i) Throwing objects in or out of the bus
- j) Lighting matches/smoking on the bus
- k) Spitting/littering
- l) Unnecessary noise
- m) Tampering with bus equipment
- n) Rude, discourteous, or annoying conduct
- o) Destruction of property
- p) Using profanity
- q) Other behavior relating to safety, well being, and respect for others.

STUDENT SAFETY AND UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL BUS SEAT BELTS

(See also DCS Policy § 17.003)

1) Usage/Requirements

- a) Prior to the operation of a school bus equipped with passenger seat belts, the driver should ensure that each passenger is familiar with the operation of the seat belts.
- b) During the operation of a school bus equipped with passenger seat belts, the driver should ensure that each passenger is secure in their seat with their seat belt fastened at all times while the school bus is in motion.
- c) In the event a seat belt is or becomes inoperable during the operation of a school bus, the driver should assist the passenger in relocating to an available seat with a seat belt that is properly working. The driver must report a malfunctioning seat belt to the dispatcher and/or fleet maintenance.
- d) If a seat belt cannot be disengaged while in use, the driver is required to assist the passenger and if necessary as a last resort, cut the belts to relieve the restraint for safely removing passenger.

2) Non-Compliance

- a) When the driver becomes aware of a passenger not fastened in their seat belt properly, the driver should remind them of the seat belt procedures and ask that they conform to safety rules.
- b) If a passenger refuses to fasten their seat belt or continues to disengage the seat belt, the driver should complete and submit a "School Bus Incident Report."
- c) If a passenger has multiple incidents related to refusing to fasten their seat belt during the operation of a school bus, the driver should notify their supervisor or area director. The area director may discuss concerns regarding the passenger's future eligible service with the appropriate school official.

DRIVER/MONITOR INTERACTIONS

1) Interaction with Other School Personnel

- a) All employees should follow the chain of command within DCS to resolve issues of concern to themselves or other employees. This includes first contacting the dispatcher, supervisor, and then the area director if there is an issue regarding your route or students. A driver or monitor should never go above their supervisor or area director's head to contact school personnel, unless instructed to do so by their supervisor or area director.
- b) Drivers and monitors should document behavior issues using the appropriate misconduct referral form. If a problem is very serious or involves a large number of students, a driver or monitor may ask their supervisor or area director to talk to the school principal for them to address the situation.
- c) A school principal or vice-principal may become directly involved with bus service when a problem situation occurs. If DCS management determines that it is necessary to involve a school administrator to resolve a problem, the driver or monitor should be specific about what help is needed.
- d) A principal may request that a driver not drive a route for their school. School buses are extensions of the classroom, and the principal may request measures he or she believes necessary to ensure an acceptable disciplinary situation. The area director will make the final decision on the principal's request.

2) Interaction with Parents

- a) A driver may share information with parents about how their students are doing on the bus. A driver should try to meet as many parents as possible and establish a good relationship with them. When parents see that a driver cares about the welfare of their students, they will support the driver when approached for help with problems.

- b) Avoid the following pitfalls when dealing with parents:
 - i) Never argue with parents.
 - ii) Never lose your temper when discussing matters with parents.
 - iii) Never attempt to discuss or handle discipline problems with a parent through the open door of a bus.
 - iv) Never tell a parent how to manage students who ride your bus.
 - v) Never allow unauthorized persons on your bus.
- c) If you are approached by a parent during a route, listen for as long as you can, politely explain that you must meet your schedule, and invite him or her to call you or your supervisor. Later, if necessary, a meeting can be arranged with you, the parent, your supervisor, the student, a teacher and/or the principal.

3) Interaction With The Community

Drivers are representatives of DCS at all times. Remember that some Dallas County citizens have no other contact with DCS except the school bus they see on the streets. Your priority in relating to the community as a bus driver is to do your job well, and particularly:

- a) Be a careful and alert driver. Never drive aggressively.
- b) Be a courteous driver. Observe city, state and DCS traffic laws and regulations.
- c) Drive a clean bus: well kept and in good mechanical condition.

BUS MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION

1) Bus Inspection

- a) All drivers are required to complete the pre-trip and post-trip bus inspection form. Drivers are required to be familiar with this procedure and exercise professional judgment while performing the inspection. To ensure driver and passenger safety, all drivers should respect this process and report matters to the appropriate personnel.
- b) Drivers are required to make a standard pre/post-trip inspection of the bus before and after each route or field trip. Additional maintenance guidelines are listed below to guide a driver with maintenance concerns other than those found during their pre/post-trip inspection.
- c) If a driver discovers in the course of the inspection that a bus is suspected to be unsafe to drive, the driver must report it to a supervisor/dispatcher before leaving

the service center. Drivers are neither required nor permitted to drive an unsafe bus. Fleet maintenance employees will make a determination as to whether the bus is safe to drive. A driver will be provided an alternative bus if their bus is determined to be unsafe to drive. When the fleet maintenance department has repaired or declared a bus in safe mechanical working order, a driver is expected to safely continue operating the bus.

2) Bus Maintenance

- a) Drivers are required to report all service issues, parts loss or any type of damage to their bus. Reports should be made to the dispatcher by submitting a "Request for Service" form. During route or trip time, the driver is responsible for staying with the bus until the mechanic repairs it or until other arrangements have been made.
 - i) "Request for Service" forms are available through your dispatcher, supervisor, or the fleet maintenance department. This form is required before repair to your bus is completed, unless, a "quick fix" is available while waiting.
 - ii) If after the first request for any type of maintenance, the bus is not satisfactorily completed within a reasonable length of time, a second request should be completed and your supervisor should be notified immediately. A third request should be personally given to the respective supervisor.
 - iii) If after the above fails to remedy the situation, a call or visit to the area director should be made for additional assistance.
- b) Preventive maintenance and unscheduled repairs for buses will be performed by fleet maintenance personnel at the service center and should be requested by the driver in a timely manner to accommodate scheduling.
- c) Drivers are responsible for the bus assigned to them. Drivers must keep buses clean inside and outside. Washing of buses will be done at the respective service centers where the buses are parked.

3) State Safety Inspection Sticker

Drivers are responsible for keeping the safety inspection stickers on their buses up to date. Drivers may request safety inspections on standard shop maintenance request forms. Drivers can be ticketed for operating a bus with an out-of-date inspection sticker.

REPORTS

- 1) Drivers are responsible for completing various reports accurately and on time. Reports are generally uniform across DCS but may vary from time to time.
- 2) Student Eligible Rider Report

Bus drivers will conduct a student count on the first Wednesday of every month of the school year. This report is required by Texas Education Agency (“TEA”) and must follow the guidelines as provided. The form and the information contained on it must be accurate and subject to validation. The report shall be remitted to the head of the Transportation Department.

3) Route Description

The TEA requires DCS to maintain a route description for each route every year. To accommodate this requirement, DCS utilizes a computerized routing system. This system designs routes based on the most current information that has been provided. Therefore, employees are required to provide updated information as it becomes available. If a driver identifies a problem with a route, they must report this to their dispatcher or supervisor. A supervisor or dispatcher may request a driver to write a route description. All drivers must provide route descriptions and similar information upon request by the supervisor.

MISCELLANEOUS SAFETY PROCEDURES

1) Radios

- a) Radios are provided in every DCS bus. If during your pre/post-trip inspection it is determined that the radio is malfunctioning, you must immediately notify the dispatcher to resolve the matter. Radios are provided for safety and dispatching reasons. Without a functional radio, you may be exposed to hardship conditions.
- b) The following are prohibited with regards to the usage of DCS radios:
 - i) Transmitting with other drivers unless told to do so by a dispatcher.
 - ii) Radio usage for personal reasons. All transmission must pertain to official school transportation business.
 - iii) Transmitting while someone else is using the radio. Wait until they clear before transmitting.
 - iv) Radio usage to call your dispatcher to see if someone is at the bus lot. Use a telephone when your bus is stopped.
 - v) Removing a radio from the bus. Radios may only be removed by authorized personnel.
 - vi) Profane, obscene, unprofessional or inappropriate language or comments transmitted on the radios.

2) "Empty Bus" Program

- a) Children, especially very young children, may not always get off the bus at their appointed stop. A child's health could be seriously threatened if left on a bus unattended for an extended period of time, depending on the weather conditions, temperature, location and other factors. Leaving a child on a bus by a bus driver/monitor may expose the driver/monitor to criminal prosecution, but the most important concern is the safety of the children in DCS' care.
- b) To prevent the leaving of students on the school bus after completion of a route, DCS instituted the "Empty" Bus Program. The program requires the bus driver to inspect the bus after each route. To show that you have completed your inspection, you will have to hang a sign, provided by DCS, that says, "EMPTY BUS" in the back door window of your bus.
- c) The program procedures are as follows:
 - i) At the end of each route the driver must walk to the back of the bus and attach the "EMPTY BUS" sign inside on the rear door glass.
 - ii) While walking to the back of the bus to place the sign, the driver must inspect around and under all seats for any students who might still be on the bus.
 - iii) After all buses have been returned from their routes, an office staff member will check the rear door glass of all buses to see if all drivers attached their signs.
 - iv) If a bus is found without a sign, the office staff member will immediately check the bus for students and then report this action to the supervisor or area director for disposition and/or disciplinary action against the driver.
 - v) During the next pre-trip inspection, the driver must remove the sign and keep it at the front of the bus until the end of his or her route.
- d) Failure to comply with the Empty Bus Program and/or leaving a student on a bus will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

3) Vehicle Idling

- a) The following vehicle idling procedures have been adopted by DCS in cooperation with Federal Clean Air Act and out of our concern for the quality of the air in our community.
- b) All DCS vehicles shall not be allowed to idle for more than 5 minutes, except as follows:
 - i) Traffic Conditions (vehicle is still in the flow of traffic);

- ii) Vehicle is being serviced or repaired;
 - iii) To defrost a windshield (max 30 minutes idle time); and/or
 - iv) Heating/Air conditioning for school buses (max 30 minutes idle time).
- 4) Cell Phone and Wireless Device Usage (See DCS Policy § 14.017)
- a) Except in the case of emergency, employees are prohibited from using any type of wireless communication device while operating a school bus or other commercial motor vehicle. This includes texting and any other use of a cell phone or other personal digital assistant. This does not include the use of a DCS provided two-way radio for DCS business purposes.
 - b) The use of headsets, hands-free devices, remote devices, televisions, video players, and portable music devices are also prohibited while operating a school bus.
 - c) If an employee receives a ticket as a result of using any type of wireless communication device while operating a school bus or other commercial motor vehicle, the ticket must be reported to the employee's supervisor within 24 hours, and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. The employee will be responsible for any fines associated with the ticket.

TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE TRANSFER PROCEDURES

In order to effectively manage its limited resources of bus drivers and monitors and to ensure efficient service to the school districts it serves, DCS may transfer employees between service centers at any time based on the operations and needs of DCS. If an employee wishes to transfer to a different service center, they may do so if the following conditions are met:

- 1) Eligibility:
 - a) Employee requesting transfer cannot have been absent from work for more than 5 days (or ten shifts) for the year in which the request is made. Missing any portion of a work-day or shift, which results in a stand-by or substitute bus driver covering all or part of the shift, will count as an absence. Jury duty, bereavement leave, approved professional leave, assault leave, workers' compensation leave, FMLA leave, catastrophic illness leave previously approved by the Extended Leave Committee, and military duty leave will not count as absences for transfer purposes.
 - b) Employee requesting transfer cannot have more than two discipline records for the year in which the request is made.

- c) If more requests are made to transfer to a service center than the number of open spots at the service center, the employee with the most seniority will be considered first for the transfer.

2) Current Service Center:

- a) Employee must fill out a written Transfer Request Form specifying the service center they wish to transfer to.
- b) The form is to be submitted to the employee's current area director, who will then approve or deny the transfer.

3) Requested Service Center:

- a) If approved by the employee's current area director, the employee must then submit the Transfer Request Form to the area director of the requested service center, who will then approve or deny the transfer.
- b) The requested service center must have an open route or position that the employee can be transferred to.
- c) The area director of the requested service center must approve the transfer for it to be granted.
- d) If an area director denies the transfer request of an otherwise eligible employee, a written explanation of the denial must be provided to the head of the Transportation Department. The head of the Transportation Department has authority to override an area director's approval or denial of a requested transfer.

4) Transfer:

- a) If the above conditions are met, the transfer will be granted as soon as the current service center can release the employee requesting the transfer so as to not disrupt the operations of DCS.
- b) These procedures are to be followed during both the school year and summer months.