

## **PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

### **POLICY:**

#### Transportation To and From School

It is the policy of the Lake Stevens School District to provide transportation for all students living in excess of one mile from the school they attend. The Superintendent shall attempt to see that bus routes and bus stops are established in such locations as to provide transportation to within a reasonable distance of the students' residences. Transportation shall be provided within one mile of the school for the following students:

- Handicapped students who are not ambulatory and/or are not capable of protecting their own welfare;
- Where routes on which the students must walk qualify as hazardous (RCW 28A.160.160); and
- Where established bus routes, time schedules, and bus capacities permit providing transportation.

If a question arises concerning the safety of any road or bus stop, the Washington State Patrol shall be asked to make a recommendation which shall normally be followed. Appeals from decisions of the Superintendent shall be to the Board of Directors whose decision shall be final. The Transportation Supervisor must approve any modification of established bus routes or stops, subject to appeal to the Superintendent.

#### Transportation Other Than To and From School

The Superintendent is hereby authorized, pursuant to the guidelines of this policy, to permit the use of District transportation vehicles for co-curricular and extracurricular school activities.

Co-curricular activities are those activities which are integral to the curricular program, including school athletics, music, dramatics, class field trips, and similar projects. Co-curricular transportation requests shall be made to the Superintendent for his/her approval.

Extracurricular activities are those activities which are not integral to the curricular program but which have been designated as "school activities" pursuant to board policy.

District transportation vehicles may be used for extracurricular activities only when commercial service is not reasonably available; and when school vehicles are used, the Superintendent shall see to it that users are charged an amount sufficient to reimburse the District for its complete cost incurred by reason of such use. Users of such District vehicle service shall be limited to those directly involved in extracurricular activities sponsored by the District.

The Superintendent, with approval of the Board, may authorize the use of school buses to other users who are engaged in conducting an educational or recreational program supported wholly or in part by tax funds or programs for elderly persons at times when those buses are not needed by the District and under such terms as will fully reimburse the District for all costs related incident thereto.

School vehicles will be operated only by employees of the District authorized to operate such vehicles when used for the above purposes.

The Superintendent may lease extra buses to other school districts for emergency purposes when such buses are not needed for district transportation.

#### Transportation - Employee Responsibility

In accordance with applicable law, WAC regulations, and District rules and regulations, drivers assigned to District transportation vehicles shall have the primary responsibility for the safety of passengers while they are boarding the vehicle, while they are on the vehicle, and while they are disembarking the vehicle, and crossing the roadway. When a teacher, coach, or other certified staff member is assigned to accompany students on a vehicle, such person shall be primarily responsible for the behavior of the students in their charge; however, the assigned driver shall have final authority and responsibility.

An assigned driver shall not order or allow a student to depart the vehicle other than at his or her boarding or alighting place unless permission to do so is first obtained pursuant to administrative rule and regulation.

Students being transported are under the authority of the assigned driver, who as a part of said authority, may take reasonable action, not including corporal punishment, to assure the safe transportation of pupils. The driver may hold

students accountable for their conduct during the course of transportation and make recommendations to the school principal for disciplinary action against a student. Any disciplinary action taken against a student shall be in conformity with district policy on student discipline.

School bus drivers are responsible for knowing and following applicable laws and regulations regarding the operation of such vehicles and for keeping licenses and certificates current. The Transportation Supervisor shall provide drivers with applicable laws and regulations and shall supervise the implementation of this policy. Providing a copy of the current School Bus Drivers' Handbook to each driver shall constitute compliance with this policy.

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### **PROCEDURES:**

#### Student Conduct on Buses

Any misconduct by a student, which in the opinion of the bus driver or bus supervisor, is detrimental to the safe operation of the bus shall be sufficient cause for the principal to suspend the transportation privilege.

Rules of conduct for students riding buses:

- A. Students shall obey the driver and any aide assigned to the bus by the District. The driver is in full charge of the bus and passengers and shall be obeyed. If an aide is assigned to the bus by the District, he/she shall be responsible for the safe operation of the bus. When transporting classes or teams, the teacher or coach shall be primarily responsible for the behavior of the students. Students shall obey both the driver and the teacher, coach, or other staff member.
- B. Students shall ride only on their assigned bus unless written permission to do otherwise has been received by school officials.
- C. Students shall not be permitted to leave the bus except at their regular stop unless written permission to do otherwise is received by school officials.
- D. Students assigned seats shall use only that seat unless permission to change is authorized by the driver.
- E. Students shall observe rules of classroom conduct while riding on buses. Noise shall be kept down to avoid distracting the driver. Students shall refrain from the use of obscene language or gestures.
- F. Students shall not smoke or ignite lighters or matches on buses.

- G. Students shall not eat on buses, except when specifically authorized and supervised by an accompanying teacher, coach, or other staff member. Buses shall be kept clean.
- H. Students shall not open bus windows without the driver's permission.
- I. Students shall not extend any part of their body out of the bus windows at any time.
- J. Students shall not carry or have in their possession items that can cause injury to passengers on the bus. Such items include, but are not limited to, sticks, breakable containers, weapons or firearms, straps on pins protruding from clothing, large, bulky items which cannot be held or placed between legs (including musical instruments), etc. Books and personal belongings shall be kept out of aisles.
- K. Students shall not have animals on buses, except "seeing eye" dogs.
- L. Students shall not sit in the driver's seat or to the immediate right or left of the driver.
- M. Students shall refrain from talking to the driver unless necessary.
- N. Students shall go directly to a seat once inside the bus and remain seated at all times unless the driver instructs otherwise.
- O. Students shall get on/off the bus in an orderly manner and shall obey the instructions of the driver or school safety patrolmen on duty. There shall be no pushing and shoving when boarding or leaving the bus. Once off the bus, students shall adhere to rules for pedestrians.
- P. Students shall never cross the roadway behind a bus unless they use pedestrian crosswalks of traffic lights.
- Q. Students shall stand away from the roadway curb when any bus is approaching or leaving a stop.
- R. Students going to and from their bus stops where there are no sidewalks shall walk on the left-hand side of the roadway facing oncoming traffic. Students shall go directly to their home after leaving the bus.
- S. Students shall use lap belts on buses when available.

- T. Students shall follow emergency exit drill procedures as prescribed by the driver.
- U. Students shall not tamper with emergency doors or equipment.
- V. Parents of students identified as causing damage to buses shall be charged with the cost of the incurred damage. Students causing the damage may be suspended from transportation.
- W. Student misconduct shall constitute sufficient reason for suspending transportation privileges.

Disciplinary procedures:

- A. Principals are responsible for correcting those students whose abusive behavior results in a bus incident report or violates the rules above. The principal shall provide supervision during bus arrival and departure times at his/her school and receive reports (written and oral) from the drivers. The principal shall insure that students comply with the specified regulations. Principals must maintain open lines of communication among school officials, bus drivers, and the Transportation Department.
- B. When waiting for a bus or going to and from a bus stop, students are responsible for conducting themselves according to the social and legal mores that apply to adults in public: that is, they must not abuse or cause damage to private or public property; they must not use obscene language or gestures; they must not engage in criminal activity. Formal complaints by citizens may be forwarded to principals for possible corrective action.
- C. Students provided with transportation are responsible for complying with the District's rules of conduct for students riding buses. Failure to adhere to these rules or abusive behavior towards the public, driver, fellow passengers, or the vehicle constitutes justification for initiating corrective action.
- D. Abusive behavior on the part of a student riding a bus may result in a written report when, in the opinion of the driver or bus supervisor, there has been an infraction of the rules applicable to student conduct. The written report is the primary means by which a driver or bus supervisor communicates a student's conduct to the school and Transportation Department. This report, in most cases, reflects an infraction of rules which is repeated by the student after his/her having received previous

oral warnings from the driver or bus supervisor. In order for drivers and bus supervisors to effectively maintain control on their buses, it is expected that action be exercised by principals when receiving such a report.

E. When a student's conduct constitutes an infraction of the rules, the driver or bus supervisor shall complete a report on the student describing the incident or damage that occurred. The driver or bus supervisor shall complete a report on the student describing the incident or damage that occurred. The driver or bus supervisor shall hand the original report to the principal. The copy of the report concerning special education students shall be given to the principal for disposition. The principal after taking action on the report shall provide completed copies to the student and the Transportation Supervisor.

F. The principal upon receiving the report shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and take action according to the procedures set forth in the District's policies pertaining to corrective action and punishment. (See Policy No. 3300.) When investigating the incident, the primary concern must be with respect to the safe transport of students. Corrective action, if necessary, should be consistent throughout the District as follows:

Warning: When a student's misconduct is of a minor nature which does not jeopardize the safety or welfare of other students or the operation of the bus.

Suspension: When a student's misconduct is deemed to jeopardize the safety of passengers and operation, when repeated warning notices fail to correct abusive behavior, or when a student incurs damage to the bus.

Expulsion: When a student's misconduct is of such nature that the safety of the bus operation and/or of the occupants was willfully and seriously threatened (i.e., student assaulting the driver).

G. The action taken by the principal shall be annotated on the report and forwarded to the student's parent for signature. The Transportation Department shall be notified.

H. Drivers shall be advised to file assault and battery charges against students who physically assault them. Under no circumstances shall the driver retaliate in kind and physically assault the student as this conduct may subject him/her to legal action.

- I. The student or parent of a student who has been suspended from receiving transportation entitlements may appeal the principal's decision by submitting a written statement to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall render a decision after evaluating the issues and facts involved. If the decision is based on issues unrelated to those described in the District's rules of conduct for students riding buses, the decision shall require Board concurrence before implementation.