

HINSDALE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
DRIVER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
HINSDALE CENTRAL H.S. 55TH AND GRANT ST. HINSDALE, ILLINOIS 60521

To: Driver Education Students and Their Parents

From: Driver Education Staff

RE: Driver Education and Legal Issues Regarding the Use of the Illinois Driver's Permit

June 1, 2012

Dear Parents and Driver Education Students:

Once your student obtains their permit, they can begin driving at home with a legal parent or guardian who is occupying the seat next to the driver and right-front door. This person must have had a driver's license for at least one year and must also be in an alert state of mind (not sleeping) while the unlicensed driver is in control of the car. **Also remember as of January 1, 1998, the new graduated licensing law went into effect and students are only allowed to practice driving with a licensed driver over the age of 21, no exceptions!** This means you may practice your driving with another responsible adult over the age of 21 **which is approved by your parents.**

As instructors, we suggest strongly that if your son or daughter is to practice driving with someone *outside your immediate family*, that they have your **written permission** to do so. We also suggest that if the car they are practicing driving in is not owned by an immediate family member, that you obtain written permission from the **owner of the vehicle** due to insurance reasons. As parents, please take a few moments over the next couple of days to discuss with your son or daughter your expectations as to who they may or may not drive with during their permit instructional period. **Students should also understand that they cannot just drive with anyone over the age of 21, but rather need your permission to do so.**

Remember, student drivers **must have their permit** in their **physical possession** both when they drive at home or **with an instructor at school.** If the student driver has a restriction on his/her permit (glasses, contacts, etc.), he/she must adhere to those provisions or he/she will be driving with an invalid license or permit. In addition, if you are **under the age of 17** and you drive after curfew hours, you must have a parent, legal guardian or someone 21 or older sitting beside you or you also will have an **invalid** license or permit. Your parent(s) or legal guardian **must also approve** of this person. Nighttime driving restrictions are Sunday through Thursday 10pm – 6am, Friday and Saturday 11pm – 6am, and is in effect 365 days of the year with few exceptions. Local ordinances may override the above.

After you receive the learner's permit, please carefully check that all information is accurate and spelled correctly. If a mistake has been made, please bring it to the attention of your driving instructor. At the bottom of the permit you will find a short black line on which your son or daughter must sign their legal name as it appears on the permit itself. The permit can be folded in half and should be placed inside a wallet or purse. **Do not** place the permit loose in a back pocket as this typically allows the permit to go through the washing machine and be ruined. If a permit is ever lost or no longer readable, it will need to be replaced at a full-service Driver Motor Vehicle Facility. Three good forms of ID are needed for this purpose (**a certified copy of your birth certificate must be one**), and you might want to talk to your driving instructor before you go.

Lastly, it is extremely important that each driver education student receives at least one hour of driving practice per week at home with parents. We suggest scheduling a permanent time where both the student and parent make a commitment to drive during that time. The driver education staff at Hinsdale Central High School is highly trained and will provide excellent instruction in both basic and advanced driving skills. It is extremely important that you frequently drive with your son or daughter to practice these skills and strategies which they learn from our instructors.

Research shows that students learn best when they learn in 20-30 minute sessions. Educationally, parents should also make certain that at least half of this practice time is devoted to practicing those skills which need improvement as outlined by the driving instructors through evaluation forms given to the students. Parents need to reinforce what is being taught by the instructors by practicing similar lessons at home.

As instructors, we find that many of our students drive at home, but do not always specifically practice the driving skills needed to improve a particular weaker area. For example, students commonly drive to and from school, go to the store, or help pick up another sibling or parent. This is great practice and should not be minimized, but a portion of practice time each week should be devoted to improving the actual skills of the beginning driver. In other words, it is of little value for a student driver to drive home from school when he/she really needs practice backing, lane changing or parking.

In order to accomplish the practice necessary to safely pass the course, we suggest starting the "new driving student" in a safe, low-traffic area such as a parking lot, cemetery, or non-busy residential side street. Fundamental skills such as stopping, speed control, smooth acceleration, and especially turning, need to be covered by using the knowledge from the textbook as well as outside in a practical sense. Students should also be ready to pull into the away from the curb by using the proper lane change procedure.

Driver Education students at Hinsdale Central High School will experience a two-phase integrated instructional program which includes 30 clock hours of classroom and a total of 6 clock hours of actual behind-the-wheel experience along with 12 clock hours of observation. When combined, simulation and behind-the-wheel meet the state mandate of 6 clock hours. **As a staff, we think you would agree that six hours of driving**

time with an instructor is not enough time for young drivers to take the necessary decisions to control the car in a safe and responsible manner.

Since the “Graduate to Safety” law has already gone into effect, all of our students this semester will need to meet the requirement of keeping a log sheet of driving time at home. A copy of this log sheet was given to the students during orientation and extra copies are always available from the students’ classroom instructor. You can also download a copy of the document on Hinsdale Central’s Driver’s Ed webpage. Please keep track of all driving time spent at home and transfer that information to the log sheets on a regular basis.

Regardless of their age, it our recommendation that students should not become licensed until they receive a total of 50 hours of continued practice both during and after the course. Ten hours of the 50 hours needs to be at night. Hopefully, this letter has provided information to you and your family which will enhance the performance of your son or daughter in our driver education course. If you have any questions or need any assistance throughout the semester, please feel free to call the Driver Education Coordinator or any of the driver education staff.