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THE DRIVER'S SEAT

SUMMER 2022—2023 EDITION

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As we gear up for another school year beginning September 6, 2022, I hope that everyone will have had some time to relax and reflect on the important job that each of us has. During last June's in-service training you may recall that I asked who the most important person in the school system was. While many might say the Superintendent or classroom teacher, one could also make the case that the answer should be the school bus driver. For without the school bus driver, buses cannot move to transport our approximately 22,000 eligible students to school. Similarly, without school bus assistants on our special needs buses, students with special needs could not be brought to school. So, please take time to recognize the importance of the job that you hold as school bus drivers and school bus assistants and know how much you are appreciated!

As is the case in most school districts across the country, there continues to be a shortage of school bus drivers in Carroll County to adequately cover on a daily basis our 254 bus routes, athletic trips and school field trips. While Carroll County is better off than many school districts as far as the number of driver vacancies heading into this new school year, many bus contractors are still in need of drivers and assistants. Please continue to do your best in recruiting friends, neighbors and family members who might be interested in becoming a school bus driver or bus assistant. Perhaps the most important quality of a successful society and community is taking care of the education of our children. Please take pride in the important role you play in the education of our students.

Transportation staff have been hard at work designing bus routes for the upcoming school year. A total of 254 bus routes will be provided to bus contractors during the first week of August for review. Contractors provide feedback and routes are then modified and delivered back to contractors; and then provided to drivers. Drivers should become familiar with their routes prior to the first day of school. Please be sure to stop at every bus stop on your bus route. Parents will be told to have their student(s) at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Student counts and seating charts will be needed by the end of the first week of school. School administrators will be asked to assist drivers who need help identifying their students for the seating chart.

Thank you for the tremendous job that you perform for the Carroll County Public Schools and best wishes for a successful school year!



Making a Self-Compassion Plan

What is it that you need to feel healthy and whole? Identifying these factors is a critical step in determining the most effective coping skills for yourself. For instance, some people feel better if they've gone on a 30-minute walk, spent an hour reading and texted with at least two friends. For others, it's more about eating healthfully, having a good cup of morning coffee and getting eight hours of sleep at night.

Giving yourself well-deserved self-care is a form of self-compassion. Being



good to yourself in body, mind, emotions and spirit is never selfish – it's *smart*. One way to make sure you're practicing self-compassion is to make a Self-Compassion Plan.

What's Your Plan?

To make such a Plan, try identifying seven key ways you'd like to practice self-compassion on a regular basis. Possibilities might include the following or any of your choosing...

- Connecting with my best friend once a week
- Having family dinners all together at least three times each week
- Working out for at least 30 minutes five days a week
- Spending time in the garden
- Playing basketball with my buddies
- Being out in nature
- Making music regularly

- Painting
- Spending time in my workshop making things
- Taking kids to the park
- Meditating on a regular basis
- Making time to read
- Soaking in a tub so my body doesn't hurt so much
- Doing daily devotionals
- Meeting with my writing group
- Volunteering one day every week
- Or any other piece of well-being

How many of these have you practiced in the past 24 hours? The past week? The past month? If you're noticing that there are some things listed that you haven't practiced in a while, consider how you can incorporate them more effectively into your regular routine. You're deserving of self-compassion, yet no one can provide it but *you*.



CPI Info Capsule—How to Prevent Problem Behavior on Your School Bus

Driving a school bus is a challenging job. You are given the responsibility of safely transporting students of all ages to and from school. You have an obligation to drive safely and attentively in all kinds of traffic and weather conditions. But you also have the duty to supervise the activities of a bus full of students—and to do it all while keeping your eyes on the road.

Managing the behavior of the students on your bus is probably the toughest part of your job. Here are some strategies that will help you prevent difficult behavior from happening in the first place.

Get to know your students.

Learn your students' names. Smile and greet them by name each time they get on the bus. Get to know your students.

Be a positive role model.

Be friendly and polite. Say "please" and "thank you." Show your riders the behavior that you would like to see from them. Compliment them when they are behaving well.

Respect students' personal space.

Students have little personal space on a school bus. Be sure that you don't crowd them any more than is necessary. If you must approach a student, remain at least one leg-length away.

Be aware of body language.

Body language includes posture, movement, gestures, and facial expressions. As students board the bus, watch for signs that a student might be anxious or upset. Also, be aware of your own body language. Try not to do things that may appear threatening to the student, such as scowling, putting your hands on your hips, or shaking your finger in a student's face.

Establish rules.

Keep your rules short and simple. If you have too many rules, students won't remember them. Four or five is usually enough. Try to state your rules in a positive way. For example, "Keep your hands to yourself" is more positive than "Don't hit!" Give a written copy of your rules to all riders, and post them on the bus, too.

Set limits when rules are broken.

When a student breaks a rule, tell the student what rule has been broken and why it is important. Then, set limits. Setting limits means that you provide the student with choices and with the consequences of those choices. Stress the choice you prefer the student to make.

For example, you might say, "Heather, please sit down on the seat. It could be dangerous if I have to stop the bus quickly."

Remain calm.

Even when students are belligerent or insulting, don't allow them to push your buttons. If you lose control, you will probably make the situation worse.

Dealing with students' behavior on your bus is not an easy job. Having a plan to deal with difficult behavior will help you keep control, maintain a positive attitude, and keep everyone on your bus

FirstNet Phone and Lockbox Unit Checks and Review

As we start preparing for the upcoming school year, drivers should begin to re-familiarize themselves with the radio and lockbox devices to ensure they are working properly and to ensure they are using their devices properly. Let me share with you some quick checks and reviews to ensure your Push-To-Talk (PTT) FirstNet Phone and Lockbox unit is working and being used in the correct way!

Quick Checks for your FirstNet Phone and Lockbox Units

In order to use the PTT phone and lockbox unit, you must make sure the bus is on or in the Auxiliary mode. You can do the following quick checks to make sure the devices are working:

Check for any loose wiring: Check the mic wiring and the wiring at the back of the lockbox to ensure all wiring is securely attached.

Lockbox “ON/OFF” switch and volume control: Make sure lockbox switch is in the “ON” position with the blue light lit, and the volume is turned up all the way, so you don’t miss important calls.

Radio Check: To make a test call into Transportation at any time, say the following:

“This is Bus # (say the number) doing a radio check”. Someone from Transportation will respond. If not, try again at least 2 more times to be sure the mic is not making any outgoing calls. Always respond back to ensure Transportation knows you heard them, and that the device is working both ways.

Review: How to Make a Proper PTT Call

When you use the mic, please make sure the mic is placed approximately 6 inches away from your face. Please hold down the mic button until you hear a beep, before saying, *“Bus # (Number) to Transportation (or Contractor Name).”* Wait approximately 30 seconds for a response, and if you do not receive a response, call again. Please remember that sometimes if multiple buses call in at the same time, the call may not come through for Transportation to hear. Lastly, when you hear Transportation respond, *“Bus # (Number), this is Transportation, please hold for a private line”*, please wait for a private call to be set up by Transportation. This takes approximately 3 seconds for the phone to end the call, and a new private line to be established. **Please wait for Transportation to respond back indicating that you are in a private call before sharing confidential information.**

Who to Contact for Assistance?

As a bus driver, if you have time after your run, or in between runs during layover, please feel free to contact the Transportation office and ask for Farrah. Farrah will be happy to help troubleshoot your phone and/or put in a Service Request Ticket for Bus Patrol to send a tech out to fix the device.



VERY IMPORTANT PRE-K INFORMATION

- “ Pre-K start date: Monday, September 12, 2022
 - “ Only five half-day Pre-K schools: Carrolltowne Elementary, Eldersburg Elementary, Linton Elementary, Mechanicsville Elementary, Sandymount Elementary.
 - “ All Pre-K students will ride the regular route bus to school in the morning and be picked up at the regular established bus stop.
 - “ All Pre-K students will be provided a **GREEN** tag by their home school that will match the bus number for the student’s home bound transportation to make identification of the student easier for bus drivers.
 - “ In addition, full-day students will be wearing a **RED** HAT and carrying a TOTE. Full-day Pre-K students will ride the regular ed. bus home in the p.m.
 - “ It is the parents’ responsibility to make sure there is someone at the stop to meet their student. If no parent or guardian is available to receive the student, the bus driver will contact the Transportation Services Department for direction about whether to return the student to school or not.
 - “ Pre-K Students should be seated in the front of the bus with the kindergarten students.
 - “ **NEW THIS SCHOOL YEAR** - Full-day prekindergarten students will attend school on both early dismissal days and delayed opening days (half-day prekindergarten students will not attend on these days).
- Kindergarten students riding the bus will be provided a **YELLOW** tag by their home school that will match the bus number for home-bound transportation.



SETTING THE TONE

“The most important single ingredient in the formula for success is knowing how to get along with people.” This quote by Theodore Roosevelt makes its way in not only our daily lives but in our jobs as well. For a driver to be successful they need to know how to get along with the students they are transporting. We have said many times to be friendly but not their friend. This is the time during the school year when expectations are established. The driver needs to have command of the school bus they are driving in order to safely navigate the roadways to and from school. Too many times we have students tell us that the driver never says anything to them. Communication is the single most important part of our discipline process used on a school bus. Drivers should be reminding students of the rules and using student’s names when they act out. Comments like “I don’t like to get kids in trouble” or “I like to handle problems myself” send mixed messages to students and parents. Drivers who follow the policies and procedures established by Transportation Services and write referrals are protected by the policies they enforce. School administrators offer help in working with problem students in counseling, in reviewing riding rules individually and by bus, and by making that all-important contact with home. Without the referral initiated by the school bus driver, the school administrator’s hands may be tied. The use of the referral tells the administrator in charge that you have exhausted your on-board methods of solving the problem. The affective driver uses the referral when it becomes necessary to do so. A key to successful referral writing is in positive identification of problem students. This is a problem for everyone in education who is responsible for a large group of students. But you can understand the importance of getting it right. The more detail administrators are made aware of, the more effectively they can act.

Discipline problems, especially on the bus are a challenge to everyone. Communicate your expectations, communicate your rules, and communicate with your school administrator. There is a saying used when speaking about the environment; “What you do to your environment today will be your environment tomorrow;” lets create a good environment on our bus today.

**IN MEMORY**

Pamela Alicia Livesay Shorb, 71, of Keymar, passed away on Thursday, August 18, 2022, at her home. Pam was the loving wife of Harvey William “Bill” Shorb, Jr.

Pam was born on January 4, 1951 in Frederick, MD to the late Willie Mae (Null) and Charles Basil Livesay. She was a school bus contractor for Carroll County Public Schools most of her working life. In addition to her husband, Pam is survived by daughters, Brandi Colleen Crawford and husband Kevin of Littlestown, PA and Billie Jo Wagner and husband Neal of Gettysburg, PA and her five grandsons, Joshua, Liam, Evan, Branson Crawford and Jack Wagner. She also leaves her sister, Colleen Fay Hahn and husband Mike and many loving nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

In addition to her parents and brother, Bryan Mitchell Livesay, Pam was predeceased by infant daughters, Alicia Mae Stotsky and Laurica Colena Stotsky.

A member of Bethel Assembly of God in Littlestown, PA, Pam loved God. She enjoyed writing, photography, and making memory books for her family. Throughout her life, she touched the lives of many, and most recently through her passions for collecting items for the homeless and making sunshine baskets for patients undergoing chemotherapy. Most of all, Pam loved being “Memaw” , spending time with family, and seeing everyone together and happy.

CONSENT AND RELEASE

Permission to Photograph, Videotape or Audiotape

Throughout the school year, the Carroll County Public School System frequently covers school activities and may use your child's photograph, video image, or voice for educational, informational, or public relations purposes, with or without identification by name.

If you do not wish to have your child's voice reproduced on tape or to have his/her image appear in such things as a video or a photograph, or on the school or school system website or social media, please notify the school principal in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their children being audiotaped, photographed, videotaped, or having their image placed on a school website or social media by the school system unless such notification is received.

There are also occasions when the media cover certain school events (such as when a government leader visits a school). If you do not wish to have your child's name or likeness published by the media, you should address your concerns directly to the school involved so that the media is so advised. Please be advised that the school system has no control over the media when they are covering activities such as sporting events and musical programs that are open to the public.

Use of Student Work on Websites or in Publications

There may be times throughout the year when the Carroll County Public School System wishes to display student work on school websites, social media, or in publications. If you do not wish to have your child's art, poetry, writing, etc. appear on school websites, social media, or in publications, please notify the school principal in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their child's work being displayed on school websites, social media, or in publications unless such notification is received.