



## Field Trip Standard Operating Procedures

2023-2024

Richland Two Transportation supports field trips for academic, leadership, athletics and other school sponsored activities. School buses and/or activity vehicles may be used to support any activity or event based on time and availability of resources. School buses vary in size. K-3 Students may sit 3 to a seat, with remaining grades sitting 2 to a seat. Capacities of activity vehicles range from 16 to 52 passengers (two per seat) and up to 78 passengers sitting 3 per seat.

Bus support is requested by using the online Triptracker system. Each school has a designated representative to input their school requests into Triptracker including high school Athletic Directors who input their athletic requests.

### TripTracker Field Trip System

New requests must be entered in the system no less than fifteen (15) working days prior to the trip date. Should a trip need to be requested within the 15 day window prior to the trip date, the school representative needs to email the trip details including ***Trip Name, Date, Type, Account, Requestor, PO number, Origin, Origin Departure, Origin Time, Origin Return, Origin Return Time, Destination, Number of Adults and Students, Contact Name and Phone number*** to the activity hub supervisor and secretary so it can be determined if we can accommodate the late request. **The email must also include the reason why the request is being submitted less than 15 days in advance.** Please note that submission of this request does not automatically mean that a bus has been scheduled. Notification will be returned via email once the request has been reviewed to advise if the request can be accommodated.

When inputting a request, Triptracker prompts completion of the required fields prior to allowing the request to be entered in the system. The required fields are: ***Trip Name, Date, Type, Account, Requestor, PO number, Origin, Origin Departure, Origin Time, Origin Return, Origin Return Time, Destination, Number of Adults and Students, Contact Name and Phone number***. If any of these items are missing, you will receive an error message indicating the field that needs to be completed and you will not be able to submit your request until the missing information has been completed.

Once submitted, you will receive an email providing the trip ID number. This is confirmation that your request has been submitted for review but does not mean that your request has been approved. If a request is rejected, you will be notified via email so you can make the necessary corrections for reconsideration. ***It is important for the requestor to refer to the assigned Trip ID # when emailing in reference to any submitted trip.***

The number of passengers is used to assign the correct number and size of buses. An **accurate** number of students and adults are essential to ensure the appropriate number of seats are available. If the number of passengers provided in the submission are not accurate, it could result in too many or too few buses being scheduled. If there are any changes to the number of passengers, please email the change with the trip ID number to the Activity Supervisor and Secretary.

When requesting a “handicap” bus to transport wheelchair bound students, the number of wheelchairs is a required field. When a wheelchair student is transported, a bus monitor, certified in wheelchair tie-down

procedures, is required on the trip and will incur additional charges to the school. If any other specialized accommodations are required, please be sure to put that information in the notes section of your request.

### **Requests to use a teacher or coach to drive:**

Richland 2 employees who have completed the appropriate training and certification are eligible to drive Richland 2 district owned buses. Driver must possess a valid commercial driver's license (CDL) with the appropriate endorsements ("P" and "S"). A copy of their license and DOT medical card must be on file at the Transportation Training Office. The driver must be up to date on Activity Bus Certification, PPT, and be fully cleared to drive by the Richland School District Two Driver Training and Safety Department.

If you have a driver, who meets these qualifications and they would like to drive a specific trip, please add their name under the "Notes" area to indicate your driver of request. The beginning time of your trip should reflect the time that your driver will be picking the bus up from Support Services. If your driver would like to pick the bus up during his or her planning time, this should be the submitted beginning time. Please keep in mind that picking up a bus early in the day may not be available based on availability of resources.

### **Changes and Cancellations:**

**All changes or cancellations must come from the school Bookkeeper, the Athletic Director or the Athletic Secretary.** No changes or cancellations will be accepted directly from the teacher or coach on a trip. If any changes or cancellations need to be made after a trip has been submitted, an email must be sent to the Activity Hub Supervisor and Activity Secretary. The email must reference the Trip ID and the information that needs to be changed. If a cancellation is needed, please include the reason for the cancellation in the email. Trips that are canceled with less than 48 business hours notice will result in a 3 hour charge to the school. Trips that are a no-show (the bus arrives at the school and is not needed) will result in the school being charged the full scheduled time on the permit. There will be no charge if the trip is canceled 48 business hours prior to the scheduled date or for High School athletic cancellations due to inclement weather. If a high school athletic trip is canceled less than 48 hours before the scheduled trip date due to the opposing school canceling, there will be no charge as long as we have an email from **our Athletic Director** stating who canceled from the other school, what time they were notified, and what reason was given for the cancellation.

### **When a trip is canceled, the request will be closed out in the system as canceled. If/when the trip is rescheduled, a new submission will need to be entered.**

In a last minute cancellation emergency, please send an email to the Activity Supervisor and the Activity Secretary with the Trip ID advising of the cancellation and the reason. Additionally, please send a text message or call the Activity Supervisor at 803-518-6182. Voice mail is not a reliable way to cancel a trip.

### **Scheduling a trip**

#### **Activity Buses:**

Activity buses may be used at any time as long as a vehicle and driver are available. However, it is essential that you adhere to the ending time listed on your request as the vehicle, or driver, may be scheduled to go back out on another trip that same day. If your trip times change after you have submitted

a request, send an email with the Trip ID and the changes that you would like to request to the Activity Supervisor and Activity Secretary. The request will be reviewed and you will receive a return email to confirm if the requested changes can be accommodated.

### **School Buses:**

Fueling of school buses is done by the State Department of Ed. Bus Maintenance Shop. Please be aware that if a school bus is scheduled for a trip, it could be slightly delayed by the fueling process. Delays are avoided when possible but mechanical failures or fueling delays may create unavoidable circumstances.

### **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during the 180 days of the school year -**

Trips using school buses or route drivers during the school day should not be scheduled to arrive at the school prior to **9:30 am** and **MUST return to the school by 1:30 pm**. Trips requiring a wheelchair capable school bus cannot be scheduled prior to **9:30 am** and must **return by 1:30 pm**.

Trips using school buses or route drivers after the school day should not be scheduled to arrive at the school prior to **5:30 pm** as follows:

Trips scheduled for other times must be scheduled for activity vehicles and driven by non-school bus route drivers, i.e. activity drivers or district personnel that have been cleared to drive by our training department and have received approval from their principal.

### **Wednesdays during the 180 days of the school year -**

Trips using school buses during the school day should not be scheduled to arrive at the school prior to **10:30 am** and pm **MUST return to the school by 1:30 pm**. Trips requiring a wheelchair capable school bus cannot be scheduled prior to **10:30 am** and **must return by 1:30 pm**.

Trips scheduled for other times must be scheduled for activity vehicles and driven by other than school bus route drivers, i.e. activity drivers or district personnel that have been cleared to drive by our training department and have received approval from their principal.

### **Non-School Days -**

Trips may be scheduled to start and end at any time, but times indicated must be adhered to. Please let us know in advance of any time changes.

## **WEATHER CLOSINGS AND DELAYS**

### **Delayed Start of School Due to Weather:**

In the event of weather delaying the start of school, field trips scheduled for that day prior to 11:00 a.m., will be canceled (both activity and school bus) and closed in the TripTracker system. A new request will need to be submitted if/when the trip is rescheduled. Trips that are scheduled for later in the day and after school will be reviewed on a case by case basis as appropriate and as directed by leadership of the district. Information will be provided on the district website and through district communications.

**Schools Closed Early Due to Weather or Bad Road Conditions:**

When school is closed early due to weather or bad road conditions, **all** field trips for that day or afternoon will be canceled. This includes activity vehicles and school buses. This is for the safety of our students and employees. If any trips are already in progress, please contact the Activity Hub for further information.

**\*\*\*Bus Costs\*\*\***

**Effective: July 1, 2023**

All Activity and School Buses are charged \$3.00 per mile for usage.

**The cost charged for mileage is routinely re-evaluated and notification will be sent if any adjustments are made to the cost.**

The charge for a bus driver is a flat rate of \$30.00 per hour and the charge for a bus monitor is a flat rate of \$20.00 per hour. The minimum charge for a driver on any field trip is three (3) hours at the flat rate of \$30.00 per hour for any trips 3 hours or less.

**Overnight trips:**

Schools will be charged 16 hours per day at the rate of \$30.00 per hour for drivers on overnight trips with the exception of the day of return. On the day of return, the school will be billed from 6:00 AM until the trip returns to the drop off point and is completed. The drivers’ lodging and meals are the responsibility of the requesting school. Lodging arrangements must be made in advance and sent to the Activity Supervisor and Secretary at least 5 business days prior to the departure of the trip. Meals can be provided to the driver as part of the group’s eating arrangements or can be cash given to the driver at the per diem rates listed below in advance of meals. A copy of the district approved trip request with itinerary, along with lodging and meal accommodations to be provided while on the trip by the sponsor, must be emailed to the Activity Supervisor and Secretary at least 5 business days in advance of the trip.

**Approved Meal Per Diem Rates:**

<b>Meal</b>	<b>Depart Before</b>	<b>Return After</b>	<b>In-State</b>	<b>Out-of-State</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>	6:30 AM	11:00 AM	\$8.00	\$10.00
<b>Lunch</b>	11:00 AM	1:30 PM	\$10.00	\$15.00
<b>Diner</b>	5:15 PM	8:30 PM	\$17.00	\$25.00

The field trip estimator, found on the Transportation web site, may be used to estimate the cost of a field trip. The mileage from a hub or Support Service Center to a school prior to the start of the trip and back to the hub or Support Service Center after the completion of the trip is **NOT** included in the estimate.

<https://www.richland2.org/Departments/Operations/Transportation/Activities-Field-Trip-Forms>

**After-school Programs:**

Effective July 1, 2023 all after-school programs will be charged **3 hours per day for the driver**, at the

rate of \$30.00 per hour, per bus plus mileage. All bus requests for after school programs are entered into Triptracker by the school's Bookkeeper or designee.

### **Drop & Pick Trips:**

All trips that are drop and picks will be charged 1.5 hours for the drop-off and 1.5 hours for the pick-up, for a total of 3 hours. Example of a drop and pick trip is the students and staff from Killian Elementary are dropped at CiCi's Pizza in the Sandhills and the bus returns to the hub and comes back at a later time to pick up students and staff to take them back to school.

### **Out of Town Drop & Pick Trips:**

Out of town drop & pick trips should be submitted into TripTracker as 2 separate trip requests - one trip for the drop off, and one trip for the return. Please be sure to enter the origin and destinations accordingly to reflect where the students are being picked up and dropped off to. The start time on the return trip should reflect the time that the students need to be picked up. Transportation will instruct the driver accordingly on departure time to accommodate your request and travel time. On these requests, the school will be billed the traveling time for the driver from the hub and back both times. Example of out of town drop and pick trips: Ridge View High dropped off in Charleston and picked up 2 days later.

### **Middle School Athletics:**

Effective as of the 2019-2020 school year no middle school events will start earlier than 4pm. As a result they are not able to be drop picks accommodated on school buses prior to the start of the afternoon routes. Please ensure they are entered with the appropriate begin and end times so they can be scheduled on activity vehicles.

## **Trip Sponsor's Responsibilities**

One sponsor agreement and one chaperone agreement (if chaperones are present) are required per bus on every field trip. ALL trips require a student roster that includes the students' first and last name and DOB. In the event of an accident, the sponsor/chaperone will be required to note the seating location of each student on the bus as well. These documents need to be given to the bus driver prior to departure. No bus will depart until the driver has all required documentation in hand. These agreements are available on the district web page. Note: All chaperones do not have to sign an agreement, We only need 1 chaperone agreement per bus even if there are multiple chaperones.

### **TOLLS: IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SPONSOR TO PAY ALL TOLL COST AT THE TIME OF REACHING THE TOLL, NOT THE DRIVER.**

Aisles and exits of buses must be kept clear of obstructions. Equipment transported inside a bus must be secured to prevent injuries in the event of an accident or rapid stop. If equipment (athletic equipment, cooler, etc.) is to be transported inside the bus, all items must fit securely and completely within a seat compartment. Activity buses have undercarriage cargo bays for transporting items. Please indicate if you need an Activity bus for this reason. If you will require cargo nets for use inside of the bus, please indicate this in the notes section. We cannot transport reptiles, animals, containers or equipment containing any type of fuel, fuel based heaters, or glass. Any items that are prohibited per school district

policy or Federal or State Law can not be transported during field trips.

It is the sponsor's or coach's responsibility to make sure gates are unlocked at the school when needed to allow bus access to pick up and drop off points. Security does not control the gates, they are the responsibility of the individual school. Drivers and students are not permitted to exit the bus or operate the gates.

The bus driver and sponsor/chaperone will exchange cards, provided by the bus driver, giving each other their names and telephone numbers where they can be reached during the trip. If the bus is going to move to ANY location other than the exact location where the students got off, this information must be exchanged prior to moving the bus. If for any reason the sponsor or chaperone is unable to reach the driver when needed, please call the Activity Supervisor at 803-518-6281.

The sponsor is responsible for providing the driver with directions to the destination and parking arrangements once there. This includes stops made at restaurants or other intermediate stops. All directions must be verbal as drivers are not permitted to use electronic devices while driving. It is the responsibility of the sponsor, not the driver, to pay all toll fees. If there are any parking fees involved, it is the responsibility of the sponsor to pay these fees at the time that they are due.

Sponsors must allow adequate time after all equipment has been properly loaded, and all students are in their seats, for the driver to brief passengers on emergency procedures and check that all cargo is securely stowed and compartments are locked.

The sponsor is responsible to ensure all passengers are accounted for at all times during the trip. This includes before initial departure, when exiting the bus, departing any location where passengers have exited the bus, upon reloading of passengers and upon final exit when the bus returns to the school.

Sponsors must ensure that there is a student to chaperone ratio of 16 to 1 on board the bus. Buses cannot depart until required safety information is briefed, an adult school representative is present on each bus, all passengers are in their seats, and all aisles and exits are clear.

Sponsors, chaperones, and students are expected to abide by the District's Bus Riding Rules as well as the District's Student Code of Conduct. It is the responsibility of the sponsor/chaperone to ensure and enforce this. The driver will notify the sponsor/chaperone of any issues or concerns that they observe, however it remains the responsibility of the sponsor/chaperone to maintain proper control and behavior of the students at all times.

If mechanical failure interrupts a trip, the sponsor needs to notify their school and the bus driver will notify their supervisor for assistance. Buses in multiple bus trips will NOT be overloaded to accommodate passengers from buses not able to continue. If it is possible to move students from a disabled bus onto other buses on the same trip without exceeding maximum capacity, this will be done to allow the trip to continue without delay while the disabled bus awaits assistance. If the breakdown occurs on the way to the trip destination, either a replacement bus or the repaired bus will rejoin the group when able to do so. **NO** event is worth risking student safety.

Athletic shoes with cleats cannot be worn on the buses. Athletic teams must plan for clothing changes if uniforms are likely to become dirty, muddy, or sweat soaked. Actual cost to clean, deodorize or replace seating surfaces will be charged to the trip's account number.

The bus interior including under seats, the overhead racks, and all under-floor storage areas must be

checked at the end of the trip to ensure removal of personal items and equipment. The district is not responsible for items missing from or left on the bus.

It is the responsibility of the sponsor/chaperones to ensure that the bus has been cleared of all trash and items before the final exit. The driver will walk the bus with the sponsor before leaving the school after all passengers have exited to confirm that this has been done. Cleaning charges of \$75 will be added to the trip cost if excessive cleaning is required.

At the end of the trip the sponsor must sign the trip permit to verify the beginning and ending time for the trip and ending mileage (the times on the permit are used to invoice the school for the trip).

**Transportation Contact Information**

<b><u>TRANSPORTATION LOCATION</u></b>	<b><u>PHONE</u></b>
Transportation Main (located at Support Services building)	803.736.3774
Activity Transportation Hub (located at Support Services building)	803.736.3774
Special Needs Transportation Hub (located at Killian Elementary campus)	803.736.3774
Richland Northeast Transportation Hub	803.736.8718
Killian Transportation Hub	803.699.2892

**Contact the appropriate hub during business hours or the Activity Department on call at 803-518-6182 for breakdowns, traffic delays, when field trips are running late, accidents during field trips, and when the transportation offices are closed. The security officer has instructions on who to contact during non-school days, nights and weekends.**

**NOTES:**

- Vans (7) or more occupants and other vehicles not constructed to meet School Bus construction standards are NOT authorized for transportation of students on school sponsored trips. (Jacob’s Law)**
- Charter buses** may be contracted to transport students, however, the charter bus company must be on the district’s approved list and must be inspected by a responsible school official to ensure the bus meets safety requirements. The list of approved charter bus companies can be obtained by contacting the Richland 2 Transportation Department.
- Only Richland 2 students, Richland 2 employees, or authorized individuals chaperoning a field trip may ride District owned or Richland 2 School buses provided buses unless prior approval is obtained from the Director of Transportation. If a booster seat is required for students of Richland Two when on field trips, they are available and may be requested by the individual inputting the field trip permit in the notes area. The Transportation Department will install the booster seat on the bus if the bus is not equipped with built-in boosters, however, it is the **sponsor’s responsibility** to secure the child into and remove the child out of the seat. **This will not be done by the bus driver.**

- All students and district employees who ride buses must participate in two emergency evacuation drills each school year as part of standard operations at the schools.
- Richland 2 has a variety of wheelchair equipped district owned buses. If any of your trip participants require to be transported in a wheelchair you **MUST** indicate that the trip request so that the proper bus can be scheduled.
- Emergency doors of buses are for EMERGENCIES ONLY and cannot be used to load or unload passengers or equipment. The door mechanism is specifically designed to hold the door open and is often damaged by misuse.
- Roof hatches and emergency exit doors should be operated only in an emergency or by the bus driver.
- All activity vehicles are equipped with air conditioned and some regular school buses as well.
- All buses are equipped with video and audio monitoring equipment and are subject to School Board Policy.
- No one is permitted to stand while the bus is in motion. This includes sponsors, chaperones, teachers or coaches giving instructions during the trip.
- The South Carolina Department of Education School Bus Rider Discipline Code Guideline applies to all athletic and field trips. While audio devices and cell phones may be authorized by the trip sponsor on athletic trips, the trip sponsor assumes responsibility for ensuring all passengers hear and obey safety instructions from the driver. The driver retains the right and responsibility to permit use of any items on the bus (cell phones, radio, speakers, cameras) that interfere with the safe operation of the bus. Failure to comply with a driver's directions may result in a delay of operation. Students should be reminded that possession of a cell phone or other audio device on a school bus route is forbidden.

Revised 6/21/23



