

Allegheny-Clarion Valley School District



Transportation Handbook 2024-2025

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Introduction

Thank you for being a part of the A-C Valley transportation team! Without you, students of our district would not receive an adequate public education. Your role of providing safe, efficient, and timely transportation to our students is critical to their well-being. Never underestimate your influence on our students. You have the power to make or break a student's day. As a team, we will overcome obstacles to reliably produce the best public school transportation possible.

Qualifications of Bus Drivers

Becoming approved as a bus driver for the A-C Valley School District requires 4 steps. No one is permitted to provide transportation for the A-C Valley School District until they have been notified by the Transportation Director that they have been approved.

1. Driving qualifications
 1. Health physical (required each year)
 2. Passing results of a Tuberculosis test
 3. Current Driver's License
 4. "S" Endorsement
 5. Certificate of Completion
2. Clearance qualifications*
 1. ACT 33/151 - PA Child Abuse
 2. ACT 34 - PA Criminal History Background
 3. ACT 114 - FBI Fingerprinting
 4. PDE Form 6004
 5. Act 168 Background check
 6. Mandated Reporter Training (every 5 years)
 7. Suicide Prevention Training (4 hours every 5 years)
3. Interview with Director of Transportation
4. School Board approval

**Information on completing Clearances can be found on PDE's website Home > Codes and Regulations > Background Checks or http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/background_checks_%28act_114%29/7493*

All original paperwork must be hand delivered to the Central Office of A-C Valley. The confidential secretary will make the necessary copies of the information to turn in to the Director of Transportation.

Qualifications of Van Drivers

Becoming approved as a van driver for the A-C Valley School District requires 4 steps. No one is permitted to provide transportation for the A-C Valley School District until they have been notified by the Transportation Director that they have been approved.

1. Driving qualifications
 1. Health physical (required each year)
 2. Passing results of a Tuberculosis test
 3. Current Driver's License
2. Clearance qualifications*
 1. ACT 33/151 - PA Child Abuse
 2. ACT 34 - PA Criminal History Background
 3. ACT 114 - FBI Fingerprinting
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All original paperwork must be hand delivered to the Central Office of A-C Valley. The confidential secretary will make the necessary copies of the information to turn in to the Director of Transportation.

Duties and Responsibilities of Contractors

First and foremost, all contractors are expected to adhere to the A-C Valley School District's policies and procedures.

Policies

School Board policies are based on federal and state laws, statutes and regulations. These policies give a framework in which a school district operates.

- Policies are established through the District's School Board.
- Within reason, all District employees are required to follow these policies.
- Policies ensure direction and uniformity in decision making for all School District employees.

Procedures

Procedures specifically describe the "way" or "manner" that School Board policy is put into practice.

- They provide information and detailed directions for school system employees.
- Procedures can affect all School District employees or a specific department or group of employees.

Transportation Department policies and procedures are necessary to reduce risk and ensure the safety of all District employees, as well as passengers. It is your responsibility to be continuously aware of and read all of the information that is made available to you. Information may be given to you while you are in the bus or at meetings as handouts. These are just a few ways that information is communicated to Transportation Department employees.

Furthermore, contractors must:

1. create, disseminate, and enforce usage of a regular vehicle inspection document
2. respond within 24 hours of any concerns brought forth by one of their drivers
3. be available by phone to the Director of Transportation between the hours of 6:00 am and 4:15 pm
4. have the ability to contact any driver at any time in the event of an emergency
5. ensure the completion of all paperwork accurately
6. ensure all paperwork is submitted on time to the Director of Transportation or their designee
7. create backup plans in the event of a sick driver(s) or broken down bus/van
8. create backup plans for your backup plans

Paperwork

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that all paperwork is completed and submitted to the Director of Transportation in a timely manner. Be advised of the current required work.

Buses:

August - All paperwork for current and substitute drivers must be updated.

August - Back up plans for ill drivers and broken down buses are submitted.

August - During the first seven days of the school term, a Bus Evacuation must be conducted, with the subsequent report submitted to the Director of Transportation.

September - The Bus Run Computation Sheet must be accurately filled out and submitted to the Director of Transportation by the 14th of September.

October - A Stop to Stop Calculation Sheet must be completed by each driver and submitted to the Director of Transportation/Transportation Assistant by October 1 and every month thereafter by the 2nd Friday of the month. Stop to Stop sheets should be updated to reflect any changes in the route throughout the year.

March - A second Bus Evacuation must be conducted in March, with the subsequent report submitted to the Director of Transportation.

Vans:

June - All paperwork for current and substitute drivers must be updated.

July - By mid-July, the prior year's (July - June) Van Transportation Record Sheet must be verified and submitted to the Director of Transportation.

July - All drivers will receive a new Van Transportation Record sheet for the new school year. This is to be submitted to the Transportation Assistant on a bi-weekly basis.

July - Back up plans for ill drivers and broken down vans are submitted.

Monthly – A Stop to Stop Calculation Sheet is to be accurately filled out and submitted to the Director of Transportation or the Transportation Assistant **by the 2nd Friday of each month.**

Duties and Responsibilities of Drivers

First and foremost, all drivers are expected to adhere to the A-C Valley School District's policies and procedures.

Policies

School Board policies are based on federal and state laws, statutes and regulations. These policies give a framework in which a school district operates.

- Policies are established through the District's School Board.
- Within reason, all District employees are required to follow these policies.
- Policies ensure direction and uniformity in decision making for all School District employees.

Procedures

Procedures specifically describe the "way" or "manner" that School Board policy is put into practice.

- They provide information and detailed directions for school system employees.
- Procedures can affect all School District employees or a specific department or group of employees.

Transportation Department policies and procedures are necessary to reduce risk and ensure the safety of all District employees, as well as passengers. It is your responsibility to be continuously aware of and read all of the information that is made available to you. Information may be given to you while you are in the bus or at meetings as handouts. These are just a few ways that information is communicated to Transportation Department employees.

Additionally, drivers are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle they are driving is safe and in proper working order. Periodic vehicle inspections are strongly encouraged. If any concerns are found, their contractor is to be notified immediately in writing.

Drivers are also responsible for maintaining a positive climate on their bus. Rules are to be clearly posted, taught to the children, reviewed periodically throughout the year, and consistently enforced. If you reprimand a student, their parents should be notified the same day. Frequent violations of bus rules or an unwillingness to obey the driver should result in an official disciplinary referral hand delivered to the school to which the student attends.

General Rules

- Bus drivers shall only transport authorized passengers. Authorized passengers are determined by School Principals or Administrators and are outlined in the bus contract.
- Smoking is not permitted on or near school buses.
- No school district employee may bring or carry firearms, knives, or other potential weapons to or on school district property, including parking lots and school buses.
- Personal use of cell phones is prohibited while on duty. If the phone call is being used to communicate with the school or a parent to ensure the safety of students, the bus must be completely stopped.

- Be dressed appropriately in the event that you are required to evacuate the bus or deal with an emergency situation.
- Be dressed casually but professionally. You are a representative of the district. Take pride in the significance of your role. Pajama pants, flip flops, high heels or slippers are not appropriate.
- Be on time, every day.
- **Drivers are not permitted to contact students via phone, text, email, or social media. Any private form of communication between a driver and a student is strictly prohibited and may result in the dismissal of the driver.**

Supplies, Forms, Personal Items Aboard the Bus

The bus driver should check that the bus is kept supplied with the necessary materials and documentation.

- Up to date route description and map
- Student disciplinary forms
- Bus seating chart (dated for accuracy)
- Student/Parent Contact Information
- Driver credentials
 - License
 - Vehicle registration
 - Insurance
- Paper towels/napkins to clean mirrors, headlights, windows, and for emergencies
- Trash basket and extra bags
- Flashlight
- Two pairs of rubber gloves for use in all body-fluid clean ups
- Hat and sunglasses for bright sunny days and road glare

Route Information

The bus driver should follow all route and time schedules. The entire route should be run, regardless of starting time. You should arrive at all scheduled stops on time, not early.

- Notify the Transportation Direction (until you have a response) whenever your route is running more than 10 minutes late.
- Report route, schedule, or student changes to the Elementary Secretary in writing.
- Do not make changes to your route without prior approval from the Transportation Director.
- Hazardous stop locations, or conditions should be communicated to the Transportation Director as soon as possible.
- You are to permit students to get on or off the school bus only at their assigned bus stops, except upon written authorization from the school Principal or the Principal's designee.
 - **Exceptional Situation: Parent meets the bus and demands their child.**
 1. Parent must present ID to verify name and photo ID
 2. Get their request in writing (date, time, location, reason)
 3. Contact the school for permission to release (potential custody issues)
 4. If parent does not comply, tell them to step off the bus or call 911

- The bus should arrive at the high school in the morning no earlier than 7:25 and no later than 7:35 a.m. and in the afternoon, at the elementary no earlier than 2:35 and no later than 2:50 p.m. Buses will line up in the afternoon beginning at 2:50.
- If a bus is likely to be idling for more than 5 minutes on school grounds, it must be shut off.
- All bus drivers must participate in and complete the paperwork for all bus evacuation drills held at schools.

Driving Performance

As a bus driver you must know and obey all the traffic laws, signs, and signals as outlined in the PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER'S MANUAL. You need to know and obey all the laws and the Department of Education (DOE) rules relating to the safe operation of school buses. The following items are important for you to know in order to be safe, keep students and others on the roadways safe, and for you to keep your job.

Speed

- The bus should never be driven in excess of the posted speed limit. When you're driving in heavy traffic, the safest speed is the speed of other vehicles. Vehicles going the same direction at the same speed are less likely to run into one another. Drive at the speed of the traffic, if you can do this without going at an illegal or unsafe speed. Keep a safe following distance.
- Do not drive a school bus at a speed greater than is reasonable, prudent, and safe under existing weather, road, or traffic conditions, regardless of the posted speed limit. If conditions warrant, the bus operator should find a safe place to pull over, stop and contact the Director of Transportation for instructions.

Responsibility for the Safety and Well Being of Students

- Do not leave the driver's seat until the bus is in neutral, the parking brake is applied, the engine is turned off, and the ignition key is removed.
- If students are aboard, never leave the immediate vicinity of the bus. You are always responsible for the safety and well-being of the students on your bus.

Responsibility for Safe Driving Behavior

- You are to wear your seat belt.
- You are to keep both hands on the steering wheel at all times while driving the school bus.
- You must never drive any school bus while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, or while taking legal medicines or drugs which could impair your judgment, perceptions, or reaction.
- You are to be well-rested, so that you can be 100% alert at all times.

Video Cameras on Buses/Vans

Video cameras are located in the interior of the buses to assist in providing a safe environment for students while traveling to and from school and to protect the bus property and equipment related to the bus. The policy, 810.2 Transportation-Video/Audio Recording, in its entirety can be found at <http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/alcl/Board.nsf/Public#>

Emergency Warning and Evacuation Procedures

Serious Adverse Weather Conditions While on Your Route

- If serious adverse weather conditions develop while you are on your route, the bus driver should place the bus in the safest location available, and call Director of Transportation immediately for instructions.

Mandatory Emergency Evacuation is necessary when:

- b. Bus stalled on railroad tracks
- c. Fuel leaking from bus
- d. Electrical or other kind of fire
- e. Bus involved in accident with other vehicle which is leaking gas or burning adjacent to bus.
- f. Smoke coming from engine or elsewhere on bus

When to Evacuate

- a. If, in the judgment of the bus driver, the students' safety, well-being, or lives are at risk, the school bus driver should evacuate immediately.
- b. Students are almost always safer when they are on the bus and the Driver/Attendant must always remember this before making the decision to evacuate.
- c. Under most circumstances, the driver would have the students evacuate through the front service door, rear emergency door, or have some students evacuate through each exit. In more severe cases, the driver might have to use emergency hatches or windows. Students would always move at least 200 feet away from the danger. If necessary, the windshield and rear glass panels can be kicked out.

Supervision of Students during an Evacuation

- The bus driver should always stand on the bus to supervise and direct the evacuation until all students are safely off. The driver should be the last one to get off the bus after checking for children hiding. Bring a first aid kit with you off the bus and the fire extinguisher, if necessary.

Planning for Evacuation

- Preplanning is imperative. Certain students should be pre-selected by the bus driver to assist in evacuations. "Helpers" stand by the service door or emergency door to help students get off safely; and "leaders" guide the students to a safe place at least 200 feet away from the bus. "Helpers" and "leaders" should be permanently seated by their exit, and should be the first ones to evacuate.

Obtaining Assistance during an Emergency Evacuation

- You could be forced to complete an emergency evacuation at any moment and when the evacuation is completed you must count your students to make sure they are all accounted for. Because of this, you should always know how many students are on your bus at all times. The driver should then notify the Director of Transportation immediately for assistance and further instructions.

Student Management

School bus drivers must maintain order and appropriate student behavior while on the school bus at all times. A bus driver or bus attendant does not have the authority to deny a student

from riding the bus. Only the school principal or principal's designee may suspend a student from riding the school bus. The following information is intended to assist you in keeping your bus orderly and safe:

1. The bus driver may talk to students individually or as a group regarding the behavior expected of them.
2. Do not embarrass a student in front of their peers. Students are people too! They should always be treated with respect – even when they are disrespecting you.
3. How do you gain respect? Start by being on time. Greet the students with a cheery “good morning” or “have a nice evening” is a good start.
4. Learning the students’ names is one of the most basic steps a bus driver can take. Being able to address a disruptive student by name will have a much more positive impact with this student.
5. Know the school’s Conduct Code (found in Student Handbook)
6. In keeping with the school’s Wellness Policy, only nutritional foods should be used as rewards or treats for students. Any time you intend to distribute a food item to students, you must provide the school nurse with a copy of the ingredients from the label to check for food allergies. Students should never be given homemade food items.
7. **Actively teach students how to act on the bus.** Do not assume that they know how to ride a bus safely. Teach the students how to:
 - A. Wait at a bus stop
 - Be at the assigned bus loading zone at least 5 minutes before the scheduled pick up time
 - Stand clear of the roadway at an appropriate distance to ensure student safety
 - Wait for the bus driver’s signal before crossing the road (at least 12 feet in front of bus)
 - Always remain in sight of the driver
 - B. Board the bus
 - Use caution when boarding; use handrail.
 - Politely greet every student every day, regardless of their response.
 - C. Sit on the bus
 - Sit in assigned seat
 - Face forward at all times.
 - Obey all instructions of the bus driver
 - D. De-board the bus
 - Remain in seat until the bus has come to a complete stop
 - Exit the bus in an orderly fashion
 - Step away from the bus (10 feet) before moving in a different direction.
7. The student is expected to:
 1. Keep his/her head, arms, and legs inside the bus at all times
 2. Treat the school bus respectfully, never trashing, defacing, or destroying it
 3. Ride only his/her assigned bus and not board or get off his/her bus at any place other than his/her regularly assigned bus stop. All exceptions must be pre- approved by the Principal or his/her designee, in writing
 4. Not bring any item on the bus which cannot be placed securely in the seat with them, creates a hazardous situation, obstructs free passage through the aisle, obstructs the vision of the driver, or which compromises the safety of other students.
8. The parent(s) is expected to:

1. Supervise their children between home and the school bus stop, and while awaiting arrival of the school bus. It also is the responsibility of parents to supervise their children after they are discharged from the school bus in the afternoon
2. Arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled pick-up time
3. Cooperate with the bus driver in all matters to ensure the safe and orderly transportation of all students on the bus

Helpful Tips and Reminders

Transporting any student in a school vehicle is a challenging and important task. We must remember that the parents of our community are trusting us with their most valuable possession-their children! Anything less than our best is unacceptable. Below are some helpful tips that can be used to improve attitude, communication, and our overall experience.

1. Attitude is everything! Stay positive no matter what. Know and recognize your own moods. Be prepared to make allowances for the poor attitude of others. A genuine smile can mean everything to a parent and child.
2. Show how much you care by getting to know the students. Know their names first and foremost, but then learn about their hobbies, interests, pets, joys, and struggles. Most often, people behave in certain ways because of the relationship they have with the other person. If a child is misbehaving, take more time to learn more about the child. If you are able to improve the relationship, it is likely the behavior will improve too!
3. You are important! You are the first representative of the school that each child sees. Do they see your excitement? Do they see your kindness?
4. Safety starts with you. Your attitude, interactions, and driving practices make a huge impact!
5. Your conduct, on and off duty, must be in such a way that it cannot be open to criticism. Be dependable, patient, understanding, polite, and well-rested.
6. Compliment good behavior! Be on the constant look-out for students making the right decisions. Tell them when you notice them making the right choice.
7. Explain the rules at the beginning of the year and review them at least four other times throughout the year. Make a game out of it!
8. Remember, you influence public opinion about the school district. How bus drivers interact with their children will guide the opinions of those parents. Show pride in your work!
9. Rely on each other. Communicate regularly. Don't be afraid to offer up new suggestions to improve our system overall.
10. Remember, most people become upset because of a lack in communication. As a general rule, when you think you've communicated just the right amount, go further!

Appendix:

Emergency Closings, Delays, and Dismissals

Announcements concerning school emergency closings, delays in the start of school or early dismissals can be heard on the following radio stations:

- KDKA AM (1020), Pittsburgh
- WWCH AM (1300) and WCCR FM (92.7), Clarion
- WOYL AM (1340) and WGYI FM (98.5), Oil City
- WISR AM (680), WBUT AM (1050) and WLER FM (97.7), Butler
- WFRA AM (1450) and WOXX KISS FM (99.3), Franklin

Announcements are also normally made on KDKA TV-2, WTAE TV-4, and WPXI TV-11 in Pittsburgh.

Information about school closings, delays, early dismissal and other safety related issues will also be announced through the School Reach phone alert system. All employees of the district should expect a phone call by about 5:30 am in the event of a delay or cancellation.

School closing information will also be posted on the district website: www.acvsd.org.

Breakfast will not be available when the district is delayed in opening.

Bus Accident Procedure

1. If you are not injured, secure the situation by seeing to the safety of the students.
2. Notify emergency (911), state police, and contractor.
3. Notify the school:
 1. Director of Transportation (724) 659-3555 x1102 (School)
 3. District Office (724) 659-5820
 4. High School (724) 659-4661
 5. Elementary (724) 659-3555
4. A list of all students on the bus must be taken and where they are seated.
5. Parents or guardians of all students, whenever possible, will be notified by School Reach of the accident and condition of the students
6. All necessary information on the students must be provided to the State Police (name, address, age, grade, and phone number).
7. The driver is responsible to file a bus accident report as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. A copy is to be given to the district's Director of Transportation or Superintendent.
8. The administrator who responds to the accident is to notify the Superintendent and School Board President and inform each of the situation.

Signature Page

My signature below signifies that I have read and will follow all of the information within this handbook as long as I am a driver for the Allegheny-Clarion Valley School District. I understand that failure to follow the information contained within this handbook may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, verbal and written reprimands, suspension, loss in compensation, and/or termination.

Driver Name (PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____