

WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

APPROVED: August 1, 2015

REVISED:

810AG1. STUDENT TRANSPORTATION EMERGENCY SAFETY PROCEDURES

The School District and bus contractors are responsible for the health, safety, and wellbeing of the students on the buses. Emergency safety procedures shall identify the responsibilities of the stakeholders in the transportation of the students. The stakeholders shall review and update, if necessary, the emergency safety procedure policy on an annual basis.

- A. Safety Measures for Emergency Early School Dismissal
1. Schools shall be normally dismissed in the regularly-scheduled order unless specific circumstances at a school building warrant otherwise.
 2. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall make the decision regarding an emergency school closing, and shall notify the Manager of Transportation.
 3. Whenever possible, the decision to close schools early shall be made as soon as possible in the morning but no later than 12:00 noon.
 4. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify:
 - Independent bus contractors
 - Building principals
 - The public via District website and social media pages, as well as through email and phone messages—information may also be shared with regional print, radio, and television news agencies and outlets
 - Police departments within West Chester Area School District boundaries
 - Food Service Manager
 - Other calls as required
 5. The Manager of Transportation shall notify:
 - Extended Day Kindergarten principals
 - CCIU and other special buses
 - Non-public school principals
 - Other calls as required
 6. Principals shall put their building early dismissal plan into effect.
 7. When the School District is closed, all afternoon and evening activities shall be postponed.
 8. Principals shall dismiss students as soon as their bus arrives, rather than wait for all buses to arrive.
 9. Principals shall have the responsibility of dismissing professional and non-professional staff within their building after determining that supervision of students is no longer needed.

10. Central Office shall determine the dismissal of non-professional building staff within the Spellman administration building.
11. Elementary and middle school principals shall remain in the building until the last child is transported home. Building principals shall develop a calling system. When all children are home, elementary building principals shall notify the Director of Elementary Education.
12. Principals supervising the final bus runs of the day shall call the Manager of Transportation when the last bus leaves the building.
13. The bus contractor shall call the Manager of Transportation when the last bus arrives at the bus lot.
14. The Manager of Transportation shall remain accessible to the independent bus contractors and building principals until all bus runs are complete.
15. The Manager of Transportation shall make available to all central office administrators a complete list of buses, which shall include the names and phone numbers of each student assigned by school/by bus route. These lists shall be used in case of an accident/emergency to assist the independent bus contractor as requested.
16. The Manager of Transportation shall supply each principal with a list of buses and the names and phone numbers of each student assigned to that school by bus route.
17. The bus contractor shall provide to the Manager of Transportation an accounting of buses returning to the bus parking lots at the completion of their routes.

B. Safety Measures for Parents, Students, and Bus Drivers during Inclement Weather

Obviously weather conditions may at times interfere with bus schedules and possibly routes. At such times, parents, students, and bus drivers have additional responsibilities.

1. Responsibilities of Parents and Students

- a. Buses must operate at a slower speed when the weather is bad and therefore, cannot be expected to keep exact schedules. Parents, as well as students mature enough to do so, must use judgment in deciding on the time to go to the bus stop and on the length of time to wait for the bus. For parents, this judgment should be based on the age and health of the child, as well as on the severity of the weather. If the bus does not come or is missed, the parent is expected to make a reasonable effort to get to school. If there is no reasonable way for the student to get to school, the absence will be classified excused upon submission by the parent of a written explanation.

2. Responsibilities of Bus Drivers

- a. Maintain the regular schedule to the extent conditions permit with due regard to safety.
- b. Modify the routes in such a way that the bus comes as close as possible to regular stops when snow, ice, or other conditions make it dangerous to run on certain roads.
- c. Limit changes to bus stops only when severe weather conditions prevent stopping at normally assigned locations.

- d. Return students to school if the bus driver determines the weather is too severe for students to be released from the bus.
- e. Transport the nonpublic students to public school or public service facility that is open and close to the bus location if the nonpublic bus driver determines the weather is too severe for students to be released from the bus.
- f. Contact Driver Supervisor's office in all situations when changes to the route and/or stops are necessary. The Driver Supervisor's office will contact the District Transportation office and/or the school principal.
- g. Students with cell phones will be allowed to contact parents when they are returned to a school.

C. Safety Measures during Bus Accidents, Breakdowns or Other Emergencies

1. In the event of breakdown, accident, or other transportation emergency, the driver shall have additional responsibilities:
 - a. Check the safety of the students. Keep them on the bus unless there is danger of fire, presence of hazardous materials, or other unsafe conditions warranting their removal. If students are unloaded, retain the group together in a safe place.
 - b. Secure the bus in the safest place possible to prevent further crashes.
 - c. Notify the Driver Supervisor's office immediately with your bus number, location, general description of the emergency, and the description of any student injuries.
 - d. Ask a passing motorist or pedestrian to make the call if the bus driver is unable to contact the Driver Supervisor's office. Students with cell phones may be asked to make contacts if the driver is unable.
 - e. Provide the student list (carried on the bus at all times) and seating chart to emergency personnel.
 - f. Limit the release of students from a bus involved in an emergency to medical personnel, school administrator, another school bus for transportation, or the student's parent. Parents only can remove their own child/children from a bus.
2. In the event of an accident or other transportation emergencies, the District transportation office and School District administrators have additional responsibilities:
 - a. Transportation Manager (or any available central office administrator) shall notify the building principals and Superintendent or his/her designee of the accident and any details known including location.
 - b. Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate communications with the Superintendent's office and the District's Communications Coordinator.
 - c. Transportation Manager and/or an available central office administrator shall go to the scene with a cell phone if the accident requires police involvement.

- d. Transportation Manager shall contact the non-public school building administration for accidents involving non-public school students.
- e. The Transportation Manager/central office administrator at the accident scene shall communicate with the school office.
- f. Upon arrival at the scene, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall be called to verify that the Transportation Manager/central office administrator has arrived and to report a general description of the accident.
- g. The Transportation Manager/central office administrator shall find the individual(s) in charge at the scene, identify themselves, and offer assistance as necessary.
- h. Building principal shall coordinate the communications to parents.
- i. Superintendent or his/her designee will contact School Board members.
- j. Bus contractor will provide second bus if needed.

D. Safety Measures for Serious Accidents When Bodily Injury to Students is Evident

- 1. Transportation Manager and an available central office administrator and the building principal shall go to the scene with a cell phone.
- 2. Building principal shall coordinate the communications to parents.
- 3. Police and/or ambulance crew shall have the authority to manage the details of accidents.
- 4. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify Board members.
- 5. All students involved in the accident shall be taken to the nearest hospital for medical evaluation if deemed necessary by the ambulance crew and/or police in consultation with the central office administrator/Transportation Manager.
- 6. The central office administrator shall notify Superintendent's office of the details obtained to this point, including to which hospitals students will be transported. Superintendent or his/her designee will contact School Board members.
- 7. Administrator shall travel to the hospital and secure names of students and home phone numbers.
- 8. Superintendent's office shall be called for an update. Superintendent or his/her designee shall provide updates to School Board members.
- 9. Administrator shall remain at the hospital and wait for the arrival of parents.
- 10. Communications office shall prepare responses to questions from the new media.

E. Safety Measures for Acts of Terror and Reports of Predators

- 1. Any act of terror or report of a predator shall be communicated to the local authorities by either the District transportation office or bus contractor conditional on who ever knows of the incident first.
- 2. The transportation office shall notify the School District administration and shall be responsible for communications with the bus contractors relative to the status of the incident.
- 3. The Superintendent or his/her designee(s) shall be responsible for evaluating the seriousness of the incident, reporting the incident to the principal(s), and communicating the incident to parents within the school or throughout the District.

4. The bus contractors shall share their driver communication materials and their course of action with the District administration prior to informing drivers of the incident.
5. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall provide updates to School Board members.