

Adopted: August 9, 2021
Revised: February 10, 2025
Reviewed: _____

797 VEHICLE USE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

This policy applies to vehicles owned by, leased, or rented to Brooklyn Center Community Schools and personally owned vehicles driven by employees on behalf of Brooklyn Center Community Schools.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The following policy has been established to encourage safe operation of vehicles and to clarify insurance issues relating to drivers and Brooklyn Center Community Schools.

- All drivers must have a valid driver's license.
- Motor Vehicle Records will be checked periodically. Driving privileges may be suspended or terminated if your record indicates an unacceptable number of accidents or violations. Should your record fall into our insurance carrier's guidelines of an unacceptable driver, disciplinary action may be issued up to and including termination of employment.
- Your supervisor must be notified by you of any change in your license status or driving record.

III. OPERATING EXPECTATIONS

- A. When operating your own vehicle for Brooklyn Center Community Schools for school district business purposes:
 - Your Personal Auto Liability insurance is the primary payer. Brooklyn Center Community School's insurance is in excess of your coverage.
 - You should carry at least \$150,000 per occurrence liability coverage. Evidence of insurance coverage is to be provided to the Human Resources department of Brooklyn Center Community Schools, each year, by a copy of your policy's Declaration page or a Certificate of Insurance.
 - Brooklyn Center Community Schools is not responsible for any physical damage to your vehicle. You must carry your own collision and comprehensive coverage.
- B. In the event of an accident:
 - Take necessary steps to protect the lives of yourself and others.
 - Comply with police instructions.
 - Do not assume or admit fault. Others will determine liability and negligence after thorough investigation.
 - Report the accident to your supervisor as soon as possible and always within 24 hours of the incident.

IV. BASIC VEHICLE OPERATION GUIDELINES

A. Following are basic vehicle operation principles to which employees are required to adhere.

- Always use seat belts.
- Drive defensively. Always anticipate what other drivers on the road might do wrong and plan your mode of escape. Never move through traffic aggressively.
- Respect speed limits and traffic signs. Follow all traffic signals.
- Always lock the vehicle and apply the parking brake when getting out, even if it remains in sight.
- During long trips, take breaks every four hours. Never drive more than 10 hours during a 24-hour period.
- Avoid driving past midnight.
- Avoid driving in dangerous conditions, including drowsiness and inclement weather.
- Do not use your cell phone or text when driving.
- No smoking, including vaping, in district owned vehicles or when transporting students in personal vehicles.
- No personal trips while transporting students or when driving a District owned vehicle.

B. Traffic Violations

Brooklyn Center Community Schools is not responsible for any traffic violations or parking tickets acquired by violation of city ordinance, state or federal laws regarding your driving habits and operation of your motor vehicle. Any ticket issued is the employee's responsibility, even if the ticket is issued while driving on behalf of Brooklyn Center Community Schools.

C. Distracted Driving

Brooklyn Center Community Schools is committed to employee safety, and for this reason firmly prohibits all behavior that distracts employees while they are operating a company vehicle. General guidelines for behavior while driving are as follows.

- Use of cell phones while driving is strictly prohibited – this includes all functions of the cell phone including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messaging/SMS, e-mail, MMS, Internet use, camera use, etc.
- Use of electronic devices – including laptops, PDAs, cameras and pagers – while driving is strictly prohibited
- Voicemail must handle all calls while driving, and calls may only be returned when safely parked off of a roadway.
- Passengers making or taking calls for the driver is permissible provided the interaction does not affect the driver's performance
- Regular callers must be informed that you will not be available while driving and should be notified of the best times to call based on driving schedule

- Employees who receive calls from co-workers who are driving are obligated to ask that the co-worker call back at a more appropriate time

D. Emergency Calls

The only exception to the cell phone use guideline is calls placed to 911. If placing or accepting an emergency call, it should be kept short with a hands-free option if available. The vehicle should be pulled over if possible.

E. GPS Systems

Brooklyn Center Community Schools understands that sometimes, especially when traveling in unfamiliar areas, drivers require assistance with directions. GPS systems are extremely helpful devices, but they can also be distracting if used improperly. Employees must adhere to the following:

- Mounted GPS systems may not block or obstruct the driver's view in any way
- GPS systems must be voice narrated and must not require that the driver look away from the road to follow instructions
- Employees may not program the system while in motion
- Programming or otherwise engaging with the GPS screen may only occur while stopped or while pulled off the road

F. Audio Devices

In some cases, worrying about music selection or touching dials and buttons on the radio, MP3 player or other audio device may be just as dangerous as cell phone use. It takes eyes and concentration off the road, which is not permissible under Brooklyn Center Community Schools policy. Brooklyn Center Community Schools does allow employee use of personal, portable audio devices. However, while the school district does not want to eliminate the employee's ability to enjoy music while behind the wheel, they must follow these guidelines:

- Employees may not take eyes off the road to adjust music settings
- Programming music settings while stopped, pulled off the road or before departing is permissible behavior
- Employees may not under any circumstances use MP3 players or other handheld electronic audio devices with headphones – not only is it illegal in most states, it also impedes the driver's ability to properly hear warning signs, signals or sirens

V. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Behaviors that may result in suspension or permanent loss of driving privileges include:

- Driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Drivers shall not operate District-owned or personal vehicles for District business when they are required to take medication, which may impair their ability to safely operate a moving vehicle. Drivers have an affirmative duty to report to their health care provider the fact that they are required to drive for District business and the type of vehicles that they are responsible for to enable the

provider to give appropriate direction about the use of prescription medication and District driving tasks. Drivers must also report any restrictions and limitations to their supervisor when taking such medication

- Negligent homicide
- Operating a vehicle with a suspended license
- Using a motor vehicle for commission of a felony
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
- Reckless driving
- Hit and run
- Three or more convictions for moving violations
- Use of a school district vehicle without authorization
- Three or more major traffic violations
- More than two preventable accidents involving personal injury or property damage in any three-year period

VI. TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

Transporting students in personal vehicles may only be done with the prior written authorization of an administrator (Superintendent, Principal or Director). The following guidelines, in addition to all above mentioned, must be strictly adhered to when transporting students in a personal vehicle.

- A yearly copy of the employees insurance information must be on file with the Human Resources Department before transporting students in a personal vehicle.
- All students must wear seat belts.
- Students should use a car seat when applicable.
- Whenever possible two staff members should be present to transport students in a personal vehicle.
- Employees should not make any additional stops with students. You should go directly to the destination only.
- No eating or drinking by the driver or passengers while the vehicle is in operation.
- The vehicle must be in excellent condition and repair. The driver is responsible to check the safety of your vehicle: brakes, lights, horn, suspension, etc.

By signing this document you are agreeing that you have read and understood the Vehicle Use policy, and will comply with it.

Employee's Signature

Date