



Hillsdale Local School District Transportation Handbook

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Welcome message from the Transportation Director

Dear Hillsdale Transportation Team,

As we gear up for the start of a new school year, I want to extend a warm welcome back to each of you. Your dedication and hard work as drivers are the backbone of our daily operations, ensuring that our students travel safely and efficiently to and from school.

As always, our commitment to safety, reliability, and professionalism remains paramount this year. We've implemented new training programs and updated our safety protocols to support you in providing the best possible service to our community.

Your role is critical in transportation and setting a positive tone for the students' day. Thank you for your continued patience, vigilance, and commitment to our students' well-being.

Let's have a great start to the school year, and remember that your feedback and suggestions are always welcome. Together, we'll keep our wheels turning smoothly and our students' futures bright.

Thank you for all that you do.

Best regards,

*Josh Ward
Transportation Supervisor
Hillsdale Local School District*

Hillsdale Local Schools Mission Statement

Hillsdale: focused on success through innovation, empowerment, and collaboration

Hillsdale Local Schools Vision

The Hillsdale Local Schools, in partnership with the community, will build character and expect excellence by providing a safe and challenging environment that prepares students to be successful in life.

Importance of the bus driver's role in the school community

In the Hillsdale Local School District, the role of a school bus driver is extremely important and multifaceted. Bus drivers in the Hillsdale Local School District are essential for their role in transportation and as integral components of the educational ecosystem, impacting students' daily lives and success. Here are some of the elements that make your role so vital:

1. **Safety:** Bus drivers are primarily responsible for the safety of students during their journey to and from school. This involves driving safely and ensuring all students on board follow safety protocols.
2. **Punctuality:** Drivers play a critical role in the punctuality of students, affecting their day's start and end. Timely and reliable transportation helps maintain the daily schedule of classes and extracurricular activities.
3. **Supporting Education:** Bus drivers indirectly support the district's educational mission by ensuring that students arrive at school ready to learn and on time. Consistent and stress-free transportation can significantly enhance students' ability to engage and perform academically.
4. **Community Connection:** Drivers often represent one of the first points of contact between the school district and the community each day. Their friendly and professional demeanor can influence the overall perception of the school's environment and culture.
5. **Crisis Management:** Bus drivers are trained to handle emergencies and unexpected situations, from medical emergencies to adverse weather conditions. Their ability to manage these situations calmly and effectively is crucial.
6. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** School buses are critical for many students, especially those in rural areas, to access education. Drivers ensure that all students have access to education regardless of location.

Duties and Responsibilities

Driving Safely:

- Operate the school bus safely and efficiently according to federal, state, and district policies and procedures.
- Perform pre-trip, en-route, and post-trip vehicle inspections, ensuring the bus is in good working order.

Maintaining Discipline:

- Maintain order and safety on the bus and adhere to a set plan for managing behavior.
- Communicate with students and parents regarding expected behavior and safety rules.

Scheduling and Routing:

- Follow assigned bus routes and schedules.
- Adjust routes as needed to improve efficiency or respond to changing conditions.

Communication:

- Communicate regularly with the transportation director, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students regarding schedules, routes, and safety concerns.
- Report any incidents or unusual occurrences during routes to the appropriate school administration.

Emergency Handling:

- Handle emergencies according to training and standard protocols.
- Administer first aid as necessary and complete required reports for incidents or accidents.

Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure compliance with local, state, and federal school bus operations regulations.
- Maintain a clean and mechanically sound bus at all times.

Record Keeping:

- As required, keep accurate records of bus maintenance, fuel consumption, route changes, and student counts.
- Complete all required paperwork, including trip logs, maintenance records, and incident reports.

Student Management:

- Assist students in safely loading and unloading from buses, including watching for traffic and ensuring children cross the street safely.
- Be aware of and accommodate any special needs of students.

Professional Development:

- Participate in ongoing training and certification classes to update driving and safety skills.
- Stay current with new regulations and policies affecting student transportation.

Community Interaction:

- Represent the school district positively in the community.
- Foster respectful and kind interactions with students, parents, and school staff.

Other Duties:

- Complete tasks as assigned by the transportation director.

Working Hours and Conditions

- All transportation staff may be part of the OAPSE contract Chapter 444.
- Drivers will drop students at Hillsdale Local School District between 7:35 am and 7:55 am.
- Each driver should begin their pre-route inspection 15 minutes before the start route time.
- Each driver should begin their pre-route inspection at 2:30 pm and be staged for student loading at 2:50 pm.
- Contract language shall be followed for all extra/field trips.

Employment Procedures

- Contact the Treasurer's office for all employment paperwork.
- Complete weekly timecard for the Transportation Director's signature.
- Complete Public School Works (PSW) yearly training.
- Complete all district-provided professional development (PD) to meet federal, state, and district requirements.
- The Transportation Supervisor will complete performance evaluations.

Section 2: Operating Procedures

- **Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspections**
 - Checklist of vehicle components to inspect.
 - Reporting and documentation requirements.

- **Route and Schedule Management**
 - How to access and follow assigned routes.
 - Procedures for handling changes to routes or schedules.
- **Passenger Management**
 - Loading and unloading procedures.
 - Seating arrangements and capacity rules.
 - Handling special needs students and equipment.

Section 3: Safety and Compliance

- **Driving Regulations**
 - Speed limits and idling policies.
 - Use of safety belts and other safety equipment.
- **Emergency Procedures**
 - Accident response steps.
 - Emergency contact numbers.
 - Evacuation procedures for fires or other emergencies.
- **Weather and Road Conditions**
 - Driving in adverse weather conditions.
 - Procedures for school delays or cancellations.

Section 4: Student Management and Discipline

- **Behavioral Expectations for Students**
 - Rules for student conduct on the bus are posted, reviewed, and enforced by students.
 - District Parent/Student Information
 - <http://www.hillsdale.k12.oh.us/district/transportation-department>
 - Prohibited activities.
- **Disciplinary Procedures**
 - Steps for addressing minor and major infractions.
 - Documentation and reporting of incidents.
- **Bullying Prevention**
 - Recognition and reporting of bullying incidents.

Section 5: Communication

- **Communication Tools and Protocols**
 - How to use radios, phones, or other communication devices.
 - Protocols for contacting dispatch, parents, or schools.
- **Interaction with Parents and School Staff**
 - Guidelines for professional conduct.
 - Handling parent inquiries and complaints.

Section 6: Health and Wellness

- **Health Guidelines**
 - COVID-19 and other infectious disease protocols.
 - Managing student health emergencies.
- **Driver Wellness**
 - Importance of driver health on job performance.
 - Resources available for health concerns.

Section 7: Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

- **Confidentiality and Privacy**
 - Understanding FERPA and other privacy laws affecting student information.
- **Reporting Requirements**
 - Mandatory reporting of abuse or neglect.
 - Drug and alcohol testing policies.

Important Contact Information

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Josh Ward	Transportation Director	419-368-8519	jward@hillsdalelocalschools.org
Angie Sigler	PK-6 Secretary	419-368-8701	asigler@hillsdalelocalschools.org
Twila Geiser	7-12 Secretary	419-368-8508	tgeiser@hillsdalelocalschools.org
Janet Mowery	Secretary	419-368-8606	jmowery@hillsdalelocalschools.org
Becky Austin	Board Secretary	419-368-8502	baustin@hillsdalelocalschools.org
Tom Williams	PK-6 Principal	419-368-8700	twilliams@hillsdalelocalschools.org
Tim Keib	7-12 Principal	419-368-8600	tkeib@hillsdalocalschools.org
Sherriff's Office	Police Department	911	

Statement of Understanding and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the contents of the School Bus/Van Driver Handbook provided by the Hillsdale Local School District. I agree to adhere to all policies, procedures, and guidelines this handbook outlines.

I understand these policies and procedures are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and drivers involved in the school transportation system. I recognize that I am responsible for familiarizing myself with these guidelines and applying them consistently in my role as a school bus/van driver.

I further understand that failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity of the violation, based on the OAPSE contract. I agree to promptly report any concerns or violations of these policies that I may observe in the course of my duties.

By signing below, I commit to performing my duties according to the highest standards of safety and professionalism as set forth by the Hillsdale Transportation Department.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature form to be filed with the Transportation Department