MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

MASTER EDITION

Last Updated: July 2026

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SCHOOL BOARD POLICY 5131.1

The following excerpt is from Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District Board Policy BP 5131.1 Bus Conduct:

Bus transportation is a privilege extended only to students who display good conduct while preparing to ride, riding or leaving the bus. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a student to be denied transportation.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform parents/guardians and students regarding regulations related to bus conduct, bus driver authority, and the suspension of riding privileges.

Bus transportation is a privilege that will be denied to those students whose conduct on the bus threatens the safety and well-being of other students.

While the law permits the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District to furnish transportation, it does not relieve parents of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

Once a child boards the bus, and only at that time does he/she become the responsibility of the School District. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular or temporary bus stop at the close of the school day.

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the School Board shall require children to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior.

In cases when a child does not conduct himself properly on a bus, such instances are to be brought to the attention of the building principal through procedures established by the Supervisor of Transportation. The building principal will inform the parents immediately of the misconduct and request their cooperation in checking the child's behavior.

Children who become a serious disciplinary problem on the school bus may have their riding privileges suspended. In such cases, the parents of the children involved become responsible for seeing that their children get to school safely.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations to implement these policies.

(cf. 3540 et seq.- Transportation)

Adoption Date: 08/07/95

Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

The home-to-school transportation program is a function and responsibility of the Matanuska-Susitna School District's Pupil Transportation Department. The administration of pupil transportation contracts and the daily transportation of students is a part of this responsibility.

All regulations of the Department of Education pertaining to pupil transportation and all Alaska State Laws pertaining to school bus driver training and licensing and school bus maintenance and operations are applicable to the transportation of students in the Borough. The District imposes additional policies and procedures that were deemed necessary to meet the goals of the transportation program. One of these additional policies which the District has imposed is the expectation that all drivers, attendants and monitors be held to Chapter 010 - Professional Teaching Practices. This article must be followed in all areas that can be a transportation environment. In particular, the 20 AAC 10.035 Moral Turpitude sections will apply. This article is attachment (1) of this handbook. Any violations of 20 AAC 10.020 or 20 AAC 10.035 may result in termination. All policies and transportation procedures, including bus routing, investigating student misconduct, bus schedules and public relations are developed by the district.

This handbook has been developed for the purpose of defining policies and procedures governing the transportation of students to and from school. Bus contractors and their bus drivers and attendants are required to adhere to the policies and procedures herein.

The handbook contains policies and procedures for both regular education transportation and special needs transportation. In some cases, there may be areas that overlap or conflict in areas of policies and procedures. **The handbook must be in the driver's/attendant's notebook and in their possession at all times while on the bus.** It is your responsibility to understand the policies and procedures of this handbook as it applies to you. If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact your immediate supervisor or the Mat-Su District Pupil Transportation Department for clarification.

PROGRAM

A. Regular Transportation
Students who reside outside of the designated walk zone of their assigned attendance center (school) but are inside the boundary, are eligible for daily transportation to and from school. Transportation is provided from a bus stop established by the Pupil Transportation Department in the student's residential area to the assigned school. Transportation is only provided to and from schools within the designated attendance center.

B. Kindergarten Students
Kindergarten students enrolled in District programs may be transported with other students on regularly scheduled morning and afternoon bus runs. Transportation of kindergarten students is not provided when it requires a bus to be scheduled

separately from the regularly scheduled morning and afternoon routes of other students.

C. Attendance Boundary Exemption Transportation

Bus routing will not be altered to accommodate the transportation of a student with a boundary exemption. Parents will be required to transport the student to school or to the closest established bus stop for the school of attendance based on space availability.

D. Private School Transportation

Bus routing may not be altered to accommodate private school children, where additional time or mileage would affect the route. Private school students may not be transported by the bus contractor until they have been approved for transportation by the Pupil Transportation Department and have been assigned to a bus run. Students in grades K-12 may be transported with public school children. Preschool students who attend a private charter school are not eligible for transportation.

BUS ROUTING

A. Routing

The Pupil Transportation Department will design and schedule school bus routes and develop bus schedules in accordance with school start and dismissal times. The Pupil Transportation Department will provide a transportation schedule, route sheets, maps and driver directions with specific bus times at student stops and schools in the morning and the afternoon to all contractors.

B. Arrival

The buses are to arrive at school at their scheduled time. The contractor must monitor the arrival of the buses at school periodically and assure the District that buses arrive at school on time. The contractor must advise the Pupil Transportation Department at any time if it becomes apparent that a schedule change is necessary to allow the bus to arrive at the scheduled time. The bus arrival/departure schedule is set by the Pupil Transportation Department, not the school, and any changes must be approved by the Pupil Transportation Department.

When the bus is running 10 minutes or more behind schedule, the bus contractor is required to advise the Pupil Transportation Department. Parents will be advised of late bus information by either an email, a text message or a voice recording through Blackboard Connect. These services are only available for those who have enrolled in this service.

C. Roadways

Only public roads meeting design standards approved by the District which specify width of road, type of road surface, grade of road, etc., will be designated for school bus service.

D. Records to be Kept on Vehicle

The driver is required to keep a bus run schedule, route maps, driver directions, student rosters, school bus conduct reports, regulations governing students riding school buses, evacuations/emergency plans, Daily Bus Reports (DBR) sheets and other special forms as required/needed in the bus transporting students. Drivers

are required to follow the bus route as designed by the District. Drivers may not change or alter the bus route. When students no longer use an established bus stop or an entire section of a route, and that section no longer serves any students, the driver should advise their dispatch department. The Pupil Transportation Department will discontinue that section of the route and eliminate the bus stop after confirming that the students will not be using the bus.

E. Authorized Stops
Drivers will only pick-up and off-load at authorized stops according to their route sheets. No unauthorized stops will be made by the driver while students are on board to and from school. If an emergency exists and the driver needs to make an unauthorized stop, he must first notify and be given permission to do so by dispatch, the appropriate supervisor, or Pupil Transportation Department personnel. On charter trips the driver may stop if requested to do so by the trip supervisor with the proper documentation noted.

ROUTING CHANGES

A. Recommendations and requests for routing changes should be submitted to the Pupil Transportation Department. Extensions and deletions of school bus service must meet state regulations and District policy.

B. When the Pupil Transportation Department changes a bus route, new bus schedules and maps will be issued to the bus contractor. The Pupil Transportation Department also sends new schedules and maps to the school advising staff that the bus run is being changed. The District will specify the effective date for the route change. However, in most cases, the change will be effective not less than two school days after issuing the revised schedule.

C. Drivers must give students a complete route/schedule change notification when there is a change in the pick-up time, the stop location, or if the bus stop has been reassigned to another bus route.

D. Most routing changes are effective on the morning run. Drivers are required to complete a route/schedule change notification form for each affected student. This notification is given to students two days before the bus run is to be changed. Verbal notification will also be given during the AM and PM portions of the route. The first notice is given to the student, the second copy of the notice goes to the school at the same time and before the notice goes to students. The third copy is retained by the driver.

BUS STOP ASSIGNMENT

A. The Pupil Transportation Department will establish all bus routes with designated bus stops.

B. Bus stops will be designated at locations within a reasonable distance from the child's home. Every effort is made to establish stops in safe and convenient locations. Those students requiring curb-to-curb service because of a disability will be picked up as close to the home as possible, and the following Alaska Department

of Education regulation AAC 27.0110(a) (2) will apply. All exceptions must first be approved by the Pupil Transportation Department. If an exception is approved and the bus stops on the street or elsewhere, students must be boarded on the right side if possible. Drivers should communicate any concerns about the loading and off-loading at the student's home to their dispatch or safety department.

C. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District receives hundreds of requests for new school bus stops every year. We make every attempt to accommodate these requests, however decisions are based on a variety of criteria. To ensure the safety of our students, we conduct an onsite review of any proposed bus stop prior to making any changes.

D. An unauthorized stop is a stop that is not on a Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District route sheet. The route sheet cannot be in any way altered, i.e., handwritten, or typed over, but must be consistent with the District format. If hand written in or altered, check with your immediate supervisor as to whether this is an authorized stop.

E. If a driver is found to be making any unauthorized stop on a deliberate and consistent basis, the District has imposed that mandatory disciplinary action be taken by the contractor. The first infraction will be a letter of reprimand; the second shall be a two working week suspension without pay. The third will be termination of employment to be no less than five years before being able to reapply or drive for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District either under contractor or district operation.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. Number Placards

The contractor must display three bus number placards for each school bus. The placards identify the bus number for that bus. One placard must be secured in the first passenger window next to the service door, the second placard in the first passenger window behind the driver and the third placard in the rear window beside the emergency door. The bus driver is to make sure the bus number placards are in place before and during each bus run.

B. Road Conditions

School bus service may be temporarily suspended due to poor maintenance or road conditions. If roads do not meet safety criteria, or are in poor condition, the bus will pick up the students at a point designated by the Pupil Transportation Department. If roads are not plowed, sanded, or need some other type of maintenance, the driver should notify their dispatch or safety department. Dispatch will then forward the maintenance request to DOT and/or the Mat-Su Borough Public Works Department.

C. Video Cameras

All contractor buses are required to have working video cameras. Video cameras will be assigned, and the videotaped information will be handled according to District policy and procedures. School officials may request the video either through the contractor's field safety officer or through the Pupil Transportation

Department. The purpose of this program is to assist school bus drivers in student management, as well as hold all riding the bus accountable for their actions.

D. Notifying Guardians of Route and Time (SPECIAL EDUCATION)
The Pupil Transportation Department will provide the contractor with the bus runs at the beginning of each school year or when the route changes. The driver during the dry run will make contact at the parent's/custodian's address on the route so that they may notify them of the route and time that the student is to be picked up before the first day of school. This will be done verbally along with the notification slip being given to the parent/custodian.

E. Scheduling Adjustments
When bus run schedules are adjusted and pick-up and delivery times change, parents must receive a bus schedule change notice 24 hours prior to the time the scheduled change will take effect. Slips providing notification of time change will be distributed to students during transport.

As these times change the driver will update his/her route sheet and immediately submit the sheet to his/her supervisor, who will send a copy to the Pupil Transportation Department.

BUS RIDERSHIP POLICIES

A. Alaska statutes do not mandate pupil transportation in the State. School bus transportation is provided as a courtesy and is a privilege, not a right. If a student's conduct is such that the health, safety, comfort, or well-being of themselves or others is jeopardized, on or off the bus, the privilege of riding the bus may be denied by a School District official.

B. Bus drivers, monitors and attendants are responsible for supervision, safety, and the behavior management of passengers. The responsibility begins when the student boards the bus and ends when the student gets off the bus.

C. The bus contractors and their personnel are required to enforce the Matanuska-Susitna School District's student rules and school bus policies, and report issues to MSBSD.

D. School principals, or other school officials, are responsible for administering discipline as part of the District Transportation School Bus Conduct Procedure. Only school principals, or other designated school officials, may suspend a student's transportation privilege.

PROCESSING SCHOOL BUS CONDUCT REPORTS

A. Disciplinary Procedures

1. Drivers are responsible for maintaining order on the buses.

2. Administering sanctions for misconduct on the school bus is the responsibility of the principal of the school where the student is enrolled.

Only the principal or designee has the authority to suspend a student's bus riding privileges. It is the responsibility of the principal to advise parents when a student has been suspended.

3. In the event of misbehavior on the part of the student riding the bus, the bus driver may issue a School Bus Conduct Report for minor and/or mandatory infractions. A School Bus Conduct Report should be issued to students the driver observes or hears committing an infraction of the rules. Reports may be written or cover an infraction the driver didn't see but obviously occurred (i.e. a fight between two students at a bus stop). In situations where something has obviously occurred, but the driver cannot determine who caused the incident, the driver should complete a School Bus Conduct Report.

4. School Bus Conduct Reports will be completed by the driver and reviewed by the field safety supervisor or the terminal supervisor, and then initialed before being turned in to the student's principal. The exception to this case will be if the principal or designee requests the School Bus Conduct Report be filled out at the school immediately.

5. Contractor's Safety will send the completed School Bus Conduct Report to the school administrators and the MSBSD Pupil Transportation Supervisor for review.

B. Suspension of Bus Privileges:

1. The driver does not have the authority to suspend or revoke a student's privilege(s) to ride a school bus.

2. School principals are charged with the responsibility of administering corrective and/or disciplinary action to students for misconduct on school buses – including suspension of bus privileges.

C. Minor Infractions- Elementary, Middle and High School:

Minor infractions would include feet in aisle ways, standing momentarily at the seat or changing seats, loud or unnecessary noises and similar actions. The driver may wish to assign a student a specific seat. If that student is disruptive, verbal warnings have not been effective, and the student continues to be disruptive, the driver may file a School Bus Conduct Report.

D. Major Infraction

1. Major infractions are those things that are life or safety threatening to themselves, other students, or adult staff. Examples of this type of infraction are possession of a weapon, hitting or striking other students or the driver, abusive language, smoking, throwing objects and other major misbehaviors. Major infractions require issuance of a School Bus Conduct Report.

E. Drastic Action

1. Under emergency conditions, when the bus driver considers drastic action must be taken in the interest of safety, the driver can return to the school and request assistance from school officials upon approval from a terminal supervisor or designee. Returning to school does not relieve the driver from writing School Bus Conduct Reports.

2. In any event, the driver will keep the dispatcher informed, by radio, and request whatever assistance/guidance necessary to resolve the problem.

RIDERSHIP RULES

A. Student conduct required at all times

1. Students must obey the school bus driver; his or her primary concern is for student safety.

2. Students should exercise good manners, caution, and consideration for other people.

3. Elementary students shall be assigned seats. High school and middle school students may be assigned seats at the discretion of the driver or at the request of the school principal or his/her designee. Kindergarten students should be seated toward the front of the bus or with older siblings. Drivers should consider parents' requests regarding assigning seats.

4. Students must not have anything in their possession that may cause injury to themselves or others.

5. Students are prohibited from hanging onto any portion of the school bus from outside the school bus, whether the bus is moving or not. Such activity is illegal and DANGEROUS.

6. Items that can be held in the student's lap or under the student's seat in the bus may be transported on the bus. Some large musical instruments which are not larger than 43"X15"X10" may be transported on the bus. These instruments must be placed in the seat with the student, next to the window. Tubas, drums and bass guitars or other instruments larger than specified may not be transported. Radios, disc players and iPods may be transported only on buses servicing schools which allow them on campus. *Any items not permitted at school may not be transported on the bus.*

7. Parents are responsible for damage to the school bus due to the misconduct of their children.

8. No animals, large or small, other than authorized (pre-arranged) service animals, of any kind are allowed on the bus at any time.

9. Ice skates must have protective guards on the blades or be placed in an appropriate box. Paper bags are not adequate for blade protection. Hockey sticks may be transported with the student and placed next to the window if they do not exceed the maximum size stated for musical instruments above and are in a hockey stick bag.

10. Skis, poles, and other such sharp-edged objects will not be permitted. Sleds and plastic toboggans may not be transported.

11. Items which must be transported in the seat with the student will not be transported if seating space is not available.

12. Medication may not be transported on the school bus without the approval of the Pupil Transportation Department.

13. Skateboards must be in a heavy protective bag to be transported.

B. Student conduct while waiting for the school bus:

1. Walk on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic.

2. Remain a safe distance from the roadway.

3. Be at the bus stop five minutes ahead of the scheduled time. The school bus driver has a schedule to keep and will not wait for students.

4. Line up when the school bus approaches the place designated by the bus driver.

5. Stay clear of wheels until the school bus has come to a complete stop – don't play or push others.

6. Let the younger children board first.

C. Students Boarding and Off-Loading the School Bus

1. Students should not cross the roadway to their bus stop until the bus gets to the stop and the driver authorizes them to cross using the flashing 8-way system in conjunction with the stop arm. Students must cross the roadway approximately 15 feet in front of the bus and only when the driver verbally authorizes (using the PA system) for pupils to cross. STOP MOVING IMMEDIATELY IF THE BUS DRIVER HONKS THE HORN. The sound of the horn is a warning that DANGER is present.

2. Place backpacks, books, or other gear in your lap.

3. Avoid loud talking, or anything else that might distract the driver.

4. Do not sit in the driver's seat or interfere with him/her in any manner at any time.

5. Keep quiet near railroad tracks so that the driver can listen for trains.

6. Keep head, arms, body, and objects inside of the bus.

7. Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.

8. Do not chew or spit tobacco, smoke, eat, drink, or make use of, or have in possession, alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances on the bus.

9. Remain seated while the bus is in motion and get off only at your designated bus stop.

10. Do not open windows without permission; maximum opening – two notches.

11. Do not damage the bus and always assist in keeping it clean.

12. Keep feet on the floor and in front of seat, not in aisle or on seat, and hips against back of seat.

13. Fighting with other students and/or attacking other students or staff/adults is prohibited.

14. Use of abusive, vulgar language, or directing such language toward other students or adults is prohibited.

15. Keep the aisle and exits clear.

16. The emergency door and exit controls may be used only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.

AUTHORIZED FOR TRANSPORTATION

A. Enrollment

Only persons enrolled in a School District program as students or designated School District staff shall be transported on any district or contracted bus. All other persons must have the approval of the Pupil Transportation Department.

B. Assigned Stops

Students will be transported to and from an assigned bus stop within the attendance area of the school they are attending. Students are required to ride only their assigned bus and may not get off the bus once they have boarded except at their assigned bus stop or at school.

C. Bus Passes

Reassignment of the bus route/bus stop – less than 30 days:
A bus pass must be issued to students by the school office authorizing a student to ride a bus other than the assigned bus or to disembark from the bus at a stop other than the stop assigned when the request covers a period of less than 30 days. Parents should address their requests to the school office. Students will not be allowed to ride an unassigned bus or get off the bus at an unassigned stop without a bus pass. Students must give the bus pass to the bus driver.

D. Reassignment of Bus Route/Bus Stop – Permanent Pass (30 days or more)

Students who attend a school outside their attendance area on a boundary exemption may be transported on a bus servicing the school they attend. They must board the bus at an established bus stop within the boundary. In rare cases, if the student's criteria meets the qualifications of certain Federal programs, a new stop may be established.

E. Non-release of Students After Boarding (En Route)

1. Once onboard the bus in the morning, students are not permitted to leave the bus until it arrives at the school. In the afternoon, students must disembark at their assigned stop unless they have a bus pass from the school office or authorization by a school monitor or official.

2. The bus pass is given to the bus driver or a school representative, or a bus monitor may personally come to the bus and authorize the release of the student.

3. If the bus has already left the school, the school office will contact the bus terminal dispatcher and authorize the release of the student at an alternate stop. The dispatcher will notify the bus driver that the student is authorized to disembark at the alternate stop.

F. Guardian Removal of Student from Bus

If a parent does not have a bus pass or other authorization to release a student from the bus but wishes to remove their student(s) from the bus, the parent must call the driver's dispatch for approval. Upon approval, the driver will check the parent's ID and then release the student(s) to the parent.

G. Release of Students to Parents at Assigned Stops

1. District policy does not allow the bus driver, contractor, or the District to withhold the student from the parent at the student's assigned bus stop.

2. If a student is unwilling or afraid to get off the bus at the assigned bus stop, the driver should immediately advise the bus terminal dispatcher of the situation. The driver should note the identity of the person at the bus stop, give a description of the individual, and a description of the vehicle and license plate number.

H. Transportation of Students to Other Schools

Students will not be transported to and released at schools they do not attend without approval from the Pupil Transportation Department. Approval will be based on the need and availability of transportation, and the approval of the principal at the receiving school.

I. Unforeseen Circumstances

If persons or circumstances, including natural circumstances such as moose, bears, downed electrical lines, threaten the safety of students on the bus, the driver shall contact the dispatcher IMMEDIATELY for help. The contractor shall first contact the Alaska State Troopers (AST) and other appropriate persons, then notify the District's Pupil Transportation Department.

J. Suspicious Circumstances

School bus drivers must immediately report to the bus terminal dispatcher any suspicious circumstances that may have occurred at the bus stop when the driver was not present or any suspicious circumstances that the driver observes. Drivers must maintain situational awareness and be sensitive to reports made by students. Depending on the situation, the bus barn dispatcher will immediately contact the Troopers, the school, the Pupil Transportation Department, and/or parents.

STUDENT PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF

A. Kindergarten and First Grade Students

Parents must be home, or plan to have an adult at home, at the time their child is scheduled to be dropped off. Bus drivers are instructed not to leave students

without visual contact with the parent or adult to confirm their presence. The driver may honor the written authorization submitted by a guardian allowing for a student to be dropped off without an adult present. An older sibling(s) may also escort a kindergarten or first-grade student home. The following steps should be followed when a parent/guardian is not at home:

1. Driver contacts dispatcher.

2. The dispatcher makes every reasonable effort to contact a student's guardian or emergency contact on file by telephone, while the driver continues their route.

3. If guardians are reached and will be at home, the student may be dropped off at home after the bus has completed the bus run.

4. If the guardian is unavailable, but another trusted adult will be receiving the student(s), the designee must show the driver their identification for the driver to release the student.

5. If, after the bus completes the bus run and guardians are still unavailable at home, the student(s) will be taken back to their school, or will be released to the Alaska State Troopers. The contractor will advise the guardian that they must pick up their child at the school or contact the Alaska State Troopers. Repeated occurrences by the same guardian may result in the discontinuation of transportation services for their student(s).

B. Impassable Roads

When roads to the student's home are impassable for any reason, the student will be released to their parents (or other authorized individuals) at a safe place. The dispatcher must call parents and coordinate the pick-up of the student.

C. Student Pick-Up and Drop-Off at School

Buses are to arrive at school at the time scheduled by the Pupil Transportation Department.

AM Drop-Off

The Pupil Transportation Department will notify schools of the arrival times of each bus servicing their school. For a list of students transported on each bus, please refer to Synergy for the most accurate report.

When the bus arrives at the school, the bus attendant will assist the students in unloading from the bus. The teacher and/or classroom aide will receive the students off the bus and escort them to the school entrance. Students should not be dropped off without assurance of proper supervision going into the school. If school personnel are not present to receive students, the driver should hold the students on the bus at the school and radio dispatcher. The dispatcher will contact the school and ask that someone be sent to the bus to receive the students. In the case of late arriving buses, the attendant will walk the students into the office to a pre-arranged drop-off area, i.e., classroom, etc.

PM Pick-Up

The teacher/aide will escort the students from the school entrance to the bus. Students should be loaded quickly, and the bus should depart promptly.

Home Drop-Off
Students may not be dropped off at the school site once they have boarded the bus without a bus pass from the school or unless a school monitor or school official takes them off the bus. Students may not be released from the bus while en route to or from school without the approval of the Pupil Transportation Department or the school. If the student's release from the bus has been approved, the bus contractor will document the release of the student noting the date, time, location and name of person to whom the student was released.

STUDENT COUNTS

A. Assigned Seats

Drivers shall assign seats to all elementary students placing the youngest students nearer the front of the bus. Kindergarten students should be assigned seats near the front of the bus or with siblings. Secondary students may be assigned seats at the discretion of the driver or the school principals.

B. Student Counts

Student counts and mileage are required by the District. Each day, drivers are required to count students in the morning, as the students get off the bus at school and in the afternoon after students have boarded the bus at the school site. The bus contractor is required to submit the student counts to the Pupil Transportation Department along with "live mileage and deadhead mileage" for their monthly billings. Students must be counted separately for the categories specified below:

1. Regular home-to-school count
2. Special education student count
3. Private school count

C. Overloaded Bus Runs

When student counts indicate a bus run is overloaded or at or near capacity, the Pupil Transportation Department will cease to accept bus passes on that particular bus run and will advise the school and the bus contractor. Buses may not be loaded beyond legal capacity. Legal load limit on an 84-passenger bus for elementary school is 84; legal load limit on an 84-passenger bus for high school and middle school is 56. Students will not be allowed to stand.

When the number of students to be transported exceeds the legal capacity, the Pupil Transportation Department will either authorize the use of another bus or will transfer some of the students to another bus run. The bus contractor is required to advise the Pupil Transportation Department immediately when an overloading problem occurs at the school site or en route.

The contractor must determine if the overloading problem is created due to the transportation of musical instruments or other gear transported on the seat of the bus. The Pupil Transportation Department will take action to resolve the problem.

UNDELIVERABLE STUDENTS

A. Occasionally during the school year students will board the wrong bus at the school. They may not recognize their bus stop en route to home from school, fall asleep on the way home, or they do not get off the bus when they should. Sometimes it is possible for the student who missed his/her stop to be dropped off at the bus stop after the driver finishes the bus run.

Drivers should notify the Bus Terminal dispatcher as soon as it is apparent that there is a "lost" student on board. The dispatcher should contact the parent and make arrangements for the parent to meet the bus and pick-up the student or that the student will be dropped off at the completion of the route. If parents cannot be reached and the student's stop cannot be determined, the student will be transported back to his/her school or released to the Alaska State Troopers.

B. Students will wait for parents inside the school, supervised by School District personnel.

C. On occasion, road conditions or other circumstances prevent the bus from traveling the regular bus route. Consequently, the bus cannot drop some students off at the assigned bus stop. The contractor will make every effort to contact the parents to inform them of the situation.

D. If a driver realizes a student has been released at the wrong stop, they will report this to dispatch immediately, or if dispatch is notified a student is missing, dispatch will then contact the school and the parents. In addition, they will notify field safety supervisors and commence a search in the area where the student was released. If at any point it appears the student may be in a dangerous situation or the parents request it, dispatch shall call the Alaska State Troopers or local law enforcement to assist in the search.

ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

Any illegal substance or suspected illegal substance found aboard the school bus which cannot be traced back to a student or any other individual will be given to the driver's immediate supervisor with a written report detailing the circumstances under which the substance was found. The contractor is to contact law enforcement and the Pupil Transportation Department, then turn over the substance and the report to the local authorities. A copy of the report should be forwarded to the Pupil Transportation Department. If the substance can be traced back to a student(s), the driver should write a School Bus Conduct Report, if appropriate, or write an incident report to be processed with the school principal as soon as possible.

VANDALISM

Parents are responsible for any damage caused to any school bus equipment due to misconduct on the part of their children. The principal will confer with the parents to create a plan for reimbursement to the contractor. The contractor should provide an invoice for the cost of repair and damage to either the principal or parent. If the driver knows or suspects that a student is responsible for damage to the bus equipment, the driver should file a School Bus Conduct Report and advise the principal. The principal should give the contractor

directions for submitting a bill and should let the contractor know if the parent has agreed to pay the cost of repairing the damage. Whenever bus seats are vandalized, the driver should immediately assign seats if students do not already have assigned seats.

WEAPONS

Drivers shall not possess firearms or explosive devices, dangerous instruments, or their replicas in school buildings, on school grounds, on buses, or at any school-related or school-sponsored activity away from school unless written permission has been obtained by the Pupil Transportation Supervisor or designee.

Definition: The term "weapon" includes two types of weapons: deadly weapons and defensive weapons. The phrase "deadly weapon" means any firearm, or any other thing designed for and capable of causing death or serious physical injury, including a knife, an ax, a club, metal knuckles, or an explosive, pressurized, or spring-loaded device. This definition applies to the use of other objects to cause death or serious physical injury. The phrase "defensive weapon" means an electric stun gun, or a device to dispense mace or a similar chemical agent, that is not designed to cause death or serious physical injury. For purposes of the prohibition against the possession of weapons, ordinary pocket knives may be deemed to be weapons.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A. Duty to Report

All personnel have a legal duty to report known or suspected child abuse to the nearest Department of Health and Social Services Office of Children Services as soon as possible. The reporting duties are individual and cannot be delegated to another individual.

B. Reporting Procedures

1. Any employee shall report known or suspected child abuse, by telephone, to the nearest Office of Children Services (OCS).

2. If contact cannot reasonably be made with the Office of Children Service (OCS) and immediate action is needed to protect the child, the employee shall make the report of abuse to a local law enforcement office.

3. Employees reporting child abuse to the Office of Children Services are required to notify the Pupil Transportation Office and comply with the District's child abuse and neglect reporting procedures.

C. Legal Responsibilities and Liability (cf. Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Handbook)

1. Employees are not civilly or criminally liable for filing in good faith a required or authorized report of known or suspected child abuse, or for participating in related judicial proceedings.

2. A mandated reporter who fails or refuses to report an instance of child abuse, which he/she knows to exist or reasonably should know to exist, is guilty of a misdemeanor. The mandated reporter may also be held civilly liable for damages for any injury to the child after a failure to report.

3. When two or more persons who are required to report have knowledge of a suspected instance of child abuse, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by any one of them who is selected by mutual agreement, and a single report may be made and signed by the person selected. However, if any person who knows that the person designated to report, failed to do so, that person then has a duty to make the report.

4. The duty to report child abuse is an individual duty and no supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit such reporting duties. Furthermore, no person making such a report shall be subject to any sanction.

5. Regardless of who child abusers may be, the major responsibilities of mandated reporters are to 1) identify incidents of suspected child abuse, and 2) comply with laws requiring reporting suspected abuse to the proper authorities.

6. Determining whether the suspected abuse actually occurred is not the responsibility of the employee. Such determination and follow-up investigation will be made by the Office of Children Services (OCS) and no independent investigation shall be performed by any employees.

MANAGING ACCIDENTS, CONFLICTS, AND INCIDENTS

A. Ineligible for Transportation

When dealing with students who are ineligible for transportation, the following procedures will be implemented. If students who are ineligible for transportation insist on boarding the bus, drivers may not, under any circumstances, involve themselves in a physical confrontation with students.

If incidents occur while the bus is at the school site:

1. The driver will remind the student she/he is not eligible to ride the bus and that he/she may not board.

2. If the student boards the bus, the driver will radio the dispatcher and ask that the school be advised of the situation and that a school administrator comes to the bus and remove the student from the bus. The bus is not to leave the school site until the issue has been resolved.

3. If the student involved does not attend the school where the bus is loading, the driver will contact dispatch and either transport the student back to the school he/she attends or take directions from the bus terminal.

B. If Incident Occurs en Route to School

1. The driver will remind the student he/she is not eligible to ride the bus and that he/she may not board.

2. If the student boards the bus the driver will transport the student to school and will issue a School Bus Conduct Report regarding the situation.

C. Gross Student Behavior

Incidents involving gross student behavior or severe disruptions on the bus require special attention.

1. Gross student behavior or severe disruption is identified as an incident in which a student(s):

    a. Initiates a physical fight with other students, the driver, or any other person.
    b. Addresses any person using vulgar and abusive language.
    c. Behaves in a threatening manner with anything that can be construed as a weapon, i.e., gun, knife, etc.
    d. Behaves in a manner that ignites gross disorder on the bus so that it is unsafe to proceed, i.e., refuses to sit in seats, yells or is very noisy, refuses to close windows, hang arms out of windows, etc.
    e. Is under the influence or in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol.

D. Illegal Substances

Should circumstances indicate to the school bus driver that students are either in possession of or under the influence of illegal substances, the driver will contact the terminal dispatcher. The contractor will contact the principal and advise the principal of the circumstances of the incident on the bus and the location of the bus.

1. The principal shall decide whether the bus should return to school, whether a school official will be sent to the bus, or law enforcement should be called or whether the driver should continue the route. If the driver continues the route, the driver will issue school bus conduct reports where applicable and will submit a report of the incident to the principal following the bus run or on the following day.

2. Any accidents, which involve any violence or represent a threat to others will be reported immediately to the Alaska State Troopers or local law enforcement and the principal by the bus contractor.

E. Notification

The contractor must notify the Pupil Transportation Department immediately upon being advised by the driver that an incident is occurring.

F. Conduct Report

Drivers will issue School Bus Conduct Reports or incident reports, whichever is applicable.

G. Misconduct

Students involved in misconduct the last two weeks of school, which endangers the safety of other students or themselves, will be dealt with disciplinary action which may include suspension of transportation privileges for the following school year.

Typical conduct on the school bus under this sanction includes: water balloons, shaving cream, raw eggs, water pistols, fighting, illegal substances, abusive or obscene language and leaving the bus from the emergency exit or at unauthorized bus stops. Bus drivers will process the School Bus Conduct Reports in the usual manner unless the report is issued for an infraction on the last day of school. In this case, the contractor's management staff must deal with the report to notify parents that transportation privileges are suspended for the following school year before the principal leaves for summer vacation. If the principal does not receive the report immediately after the last day students are transported, the student's transportation privileges may not be suspended the following year.

H. Physical Contact

School bus drivers, monitors and attendants are not permitted to touch the students except in the following situations:

1. To secure those students needing seat restraints.
2. To administer first aid or medical treatment in an emergency.
3. To protect a child from being hurt.
4. To separate two or more students who are fighting or otherwise trying to hurt one another.
5. To defend himself/herself against attack. However, the driver is to defend himself/herself passively and not become the aggressor.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS, MEDICAL INFORMATION

A. Special Factors

To help assure safe transportation of the student, the driver, monitor and attendant should be aware of any special problems a student may have (i.e., the student tends to have seizures, suffers side effects of medication, has breathing difficulties, etc.). The Pupil Transportation Department will provide as much information as is pertinent and available. A home telephone number and a reliable emergency message phone number are critical to parental contact. Drivers are urged to keep contact numbers for each student current on the student roster.

B. Medications

Medication will not be transported to and from the school and the child's home. Special exceptions are made only by prior approval from the Pupil Transportation Department. When a driver becomes aware that a student has medication on the bus, the driver or attendant must take possession of the medication and give the medication to either the appropriate School District employee after the morning run or to parents/guardians after the afternoon run. The driver should complete an incident report documenting the situation.

C. Emergency Drills

Three emergency evacuation drills are required each school year with the contractor coordinating the dates with the schools and Pupil Transportation Department.

The District will determine the extent and format of the drill. The bus contractor is required to submit a written report for each drill certifying the date of the drill and lapsed time of each drill.

Evacuation procedures should be understood and rehearsed by drivers, monitors, and attendants to assure competent handling of students should an emergency arise. Drivers, monitors, and attendants should be able to evacuate all passengers by all available exits.

INCIDENTS INVOLVING STUDENTS' PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

A. It is very important that drivers, monitors and attendants communicate clearly and quickly when any incident occurs involving injury or possible injury to the student or the student's physical well-being. Properly communicating will protect the student if medical attention is necessary and may protect those responsible for the student's transportation from unwarranted liability.

B. The driver, monitor and attendant should immediately report the incident to the dispatcher by radio and must complete a written report as soon as possible. If necessary, the bus should return to school where the office staff and/or nurse should assist the student. If necessary, Emergency Medical Personnel (EMTs) should be called to the bus, while the bus is en route, to provide medical assistance to the student(s). The contractor will make necessary contacts with the school and the EMTs and parents.

C. The contractor will also notify the Pupil Transportation Department of the incident by telephone at the time the incident occurs and will forward written reports to the Pupil Transportation Department if requested.

D. If the student is not taken to school at the time of the incident but treated by EMT personnel and taken home, the bus contractor must advise the school as soon as possible of the incident.

E. The parents must be notified of the incident as soon as possible by the school and/or the bus contractor's management personnel.

BUS ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT PROCEDURES

A. Contractor Reporting

The School District requires bus contractors to report all bus accidents or bus incidents occurring while en route to and from school, or while on charter trips with or without students on board. Incidents and accidents are to be reported immediately to the driver's appropriate supervisor for the contractor. The bus contractor, in turn, will immediately provide the following information when reporting the accident/incident to the Pupil Transportation Department:

1. What bus route is involved?
2. How many students are on board the bus?
3. Are there obvious injuries, possible injuries, probably no injuries?
4. Where and when did the accident/incident occur?
5. What is the estimated impact to the bus and the other vehicle(s), if other vehicles are involved, or of other property, if involved?
6. Have the Alaska State Troopers or the Palmer or Wasilla Police Department been called?

7. Are Emergency Medical Services responding?

B. Contractor shall notify:

1. Alaska State Troopers, Palmer Police Department, or Wasilla Police Department, if either bus or other vehicle or property is damaged
2. Emergency Medical Services if there are obvious injuries or damage to vehicles
3. District Pupil Transportation Department
4. School principal

C. District Pupil Transportation Department shall notify:

1. Superintendent's Office
2. Risk Management
3. School District Public Information Coordinator

D. Parents may be notified by one or more of the following agencies:

1. Bus contractor and/or Pupil Transportation Department as soon after accident/incident has occurred, if possible, regardless of when the accident/incident occurred – going to school or coming home from school.
    a. What has happened
    b. Whether or not Troopers/Police were called
    c. Whether the EMTs or school nurse examined student for injuries
    d. Whether or not the student is being transported to the hospital
    e. When the student is expected to be transported to school or home, as applicable

2. School Nurse – if students are examined by the school nurse after the accident/incident to advise parents that student was examined and to share findings of the examination.

3. Hospital Staff – when students are treated at the hospital.

4. Other District personnel as applicable.

E. Handling Injuries

1. If the bus is involved in an incident but is not damaged, or if the bus is involved in an accident and neither the bus nor the other vehicle is damaged, and if the students do not appear injured:

    a. The student will be taken to the school and examined by the school nurse. The school nurse must complete an examination of each student. A list of the names of the students examined and a summary of injuries will be sent to the Pupil Transportation Department.

    b. If the school nurse is not available at school and if an accident/incident occurs en route from school to home, the students will be transported home. The bus contractor will notify only those parents whose students were on board at the time of the

incident/accident and that the student(s) have not been examined for injuries by medical personnel.

2. If the bus is damaged in an accident or incident, or if the bus and/or another vehicle are damaged in an accident and injuries have occurred, the Emergency Medical Services (EMT's) will be called to the scene to examine the students.

    a. Students released by EMT personnel at the scene will be transported home or to school. The bus contractor will advise the parents that students have been examined and released.

    b. The contractor or District personnel will contact the parents of students transferred to a medical facility by EMT personnel.

3. Pupil Transportation Staff, the school principal or another District personnel will be present at the medical facility to communicate with and assist parents of students being treated. School principals, hospital staff, counselors, and other qualified counselors and approved District personnel will assist the Public Information coordinator in communicating information from the Hospital Public Information Officer to parents when appropriate.

4. The contractor safety personnel, Pupil Transportation staff and/or other appropriate District personnel will be present at the scene of all serious bus accidents/incidents if possible. However, the primary concern shall be to take action to ensure that students involved in an accident/incident are cared for in a proper and timely manner and that parents are contacted, and their concerns are met.

5. The bus contractor shall complete a written report of all accidents on Department of Education forms and/or a written report on District provided forms. The Pupil Transportation Department shall be responsible for reviewing the reports for accuracy and submitting the required reports to the Department of Education and submitting the other reports as necessary.

6. Only authorized School District personnel will release statements and information to the media regarding an accident/incident or the students involved.

7. The contractor will not allow buses to be pulled from ditches or other areas back onto the roadway with students on board unless it has been determined by School District personnel at the accident scene to be in the best interest of the students to remain on board the vehicle.

8. Students should not be evacuated from any bus until a replacement bus has arrived and they can board the replacement bus directly unless staying on the bus presents a safety hazard to the students. In this instance students must be evacuated to a safe place and provided as much warmth and comfort as possible until the replacement bus arrives. Drivers must use tire chocks to stabilize buses when chaining, when evacuating students on icy roads or graded roadways, or at any other time when the vehicle is disabled and there is a possibility the bus may slide due to road conditions.

SCHOOL AND ROAD CLOSURES

During most of the school year all highways, arterials and subdivision roads are open, and buses can safely travel to and from school. On occasion sections of some roadways are not passable for some reason or most of the road system may be impassable due to weather conditions.

When the bus driver finds a portion of the regular route impassable while en route to or from school, parents will be advised of a designated pick-up or drop-off point through announcements on KMBQ radio during the morning and afternoon runs. Parents will also be notified using the District's messaging application, Blackboard. In addition, the Bus Contractor will contact as many parents as possible by phone in conjunction with the school.

In the afternoon middle school and high school, students will not be allowed to leave the bus unless the parent, or someone acting on behalf of the parent, is there to receive the student. Students whose parents cannot be reached will be transported back to their respective schools and held until parents pick them up.

Public announcements will be made by the School District by 5:00 a.m. through radio, television news stations, the District's website, social media and printed media in case of a school closure.

DRIVERS, MONITORS AND ATTENDANTS

The school bus driver, monitor and attendant are considered key people in the safe and efficient transportation of school children. The following identifies some of the responsibilities of school bus drivers, monitors and attendants and general policies and rules that are of specific concern to the District.

A. General Areas

1. The performance of the school bus drivers, monitors and attendants are subject to review by the Pupil Transportation Supervisor. Any driver, monitor or attendant whose performance is determined to be unacceptable is subject to removal from the bus run upon request by the Pupil Transportation Supervisor or the Superintendent.

2. Drivers, monitors, and attendants are required to ensure School Board policies and District regulations and procedures are followed as they refer to pupil transportation.

3. Drivers must obey all State traffic laws and driving regulations at all times and maintain their school bus certification in the State of Alaska.

4. Drivers, monitors, and attendants must keep their person neat and clean and **their conduct comparable to that which is expected of a teacher.** They shall not use or be under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances when on duty.

B. Passenger Management

It is important that the driver, monitor, and attendant generate a good atmosphere on the school bus. This is an atmosphere in which students respond positively to

their authority and are motivated to follow bus riding rules. Drivers, monitors, and attendants should use positive reinforcement and other tools to maintain order on the bus and to work with students in a positive manner.

When students refuse to obey the rules, the driver, monitor, and attendant are required to address the problem using the School Bus Conduct Report process. It is important that drivers be consistent in documenting all incidents worthy of discipline in an objective, fair and professional manner.

C. Confidentiality

Drivers, monitors and bus attendants need to maintain a rapport with students and parents and must work closely with school officials and principals in a friendly and cooperative manner. **Drivers must keep all disciplinary and medical information pertaining to specific students confidential**.

D. Investigation of Complaint

When the Pupil Transportation Department receives complaints regarding transportation services provided or regarding the performance of a driver, monitor, or attendant, the following fact-finding process may be initiated:

1. The Pupil Transportation Department will forward the complaint to the contractor to gather information relative to the problem. They may contact the driver, principal, teachers, and parents as needed to gather pertinent information to the complaint.

2. When necessary, the drivers, monitors, attendant, principal, bus contractor and the parent may meet with the Pupil Transportation Supervisor to discuss the complaint and to resolve issues.

3. Agreed upon resolutions will be implemented where applicable. This is a fact-finding process designed to find a solution to unresolved issues. It is not a disciplinary process. Any disciplinary actions involving the driver, monitor or attendant relative to the complaint or issue are the responsibility of the bus contractor.

4. The driver may arrange to meet with the principal to discuss matters related to the behavior of students and situations occurring during transportation of the students to and from school. However, a meeting with principals to discuss driver performance should be set up by the driver's supervisor or the Pupil Transportation Department. The driver's supervisor should be present at all meetings between the driver and any school representative where the driver's performance is the issue.

ATTENDANTS – ASSIGNMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Assigning

Adult attendants will be assigned to assist in the transportation of students when necessary. Criteria for assigning bus attendants takes into consideration the following:

a. The need for assistance necessary for loading and unloading students on and off the bus.

b. The need to provide care and assistance to some students en route.

c. The need to provide assistance to the driver in emergency evacuation situations.

d. The need to read data provided to dispatch on special concerns or training for particular students assigned to her/his bus.

B. Special Needs

Attendants will be assigned to all special needs buses unless otherwise directed by the District. Drivers and attendants will work as a team in all areas including loading and unloading students and discipline.

C. Responsibilities

The bus attendant's responsibilities include:

a. Participating in development of bus evacuation plans and assisting the driver in the evacuation process.

b. Assist students in getting on and off the bus and securing all students into seat restraints, booster seats and car seats.

c. Monitoring behavior of students en route to and from school and assisting drivers in discipline. Attendants should be seated in the back of the bus so they can observe students or, if necessary, change seats so students can be observed during the trip to and from school.

d. Assisting non-ambulatory students and their mobility devices on and off the bus and properly securing the student and device on the bus.

e. Help drivers when backing on school grounds or on roadways and driveways.

f. Observe any hazards and inform drivers of mechanical or safety problems that he/she should be made aware of.

g. Help maintain a clean bus, which includes car seats, booster seats, or other items which may need cleaning, i.e., toys, books, etc.

SITUATIONS NOT COVERED BY THIS PUBLICATION

When an employee has a problem that is not covered by these rules, or when faced with a serious or hazardous situation, she/he will contact the terminal supervisor immediately. If needed, the terminal supervisor will direct the employee to the appropriate person who can resolve the issue.



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

Last Updated: 2026-2027

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

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SAFETY

A. School Bus Driver Qualifications and Training

To ensure safe drivers, the Mat-Su Borough School District (MSBSD) and the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) require all school bus drivers to complete a minimum of 52 hours training prior to being issued a school bus permit. The District also requires that all drivers spend at least two days with an experienced driver before they are allowed to transport children. Once licensed and assigned to a route, drivers attend regularly scheduled safety meetings and in-service training sessions to improve their skills in transporting special needs students. DOT policy also requires each driver to be at least 21 years of age, pass a physical examination, obtain First Aid and CPR training, obtain traffic and criminal clearances annually or upon request, and undergo drug and alcohol screening. A driver may receive individualized training in order to accommodate your child's specific needs. If special training is necessary, you may contact the Pupil Transportation Department.

B. Special Needs Attendant Training

All special needs school bus attendants receive a minimum of 20 hours of classroom and on-the-job training prior to being assigned to a route. Additional training includes First Aid and CPR training. Bus attendants are required to attend regularly scheduled safety meetings and in-service training sessions to improve their skills in transporting special needs students. Attendants may also receive specific training to accommodate your child's individual needs.

C. School Buses

To ensure use of safe equipment, all school buses are inspected daily by the bus driver before he/she begins their route. Buses also receive a thorough preventative maintenance check every 3,000 miles and are inspected twice annually by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED).

D. Behavior

Students are expected to behave appropriately on the bus so that safe transportation can be provided. Students whose behavior is related to a disability may have individual accommodation or plans developed. Contact your child's special education teacher or principal if assistance is needed in this area.

E. Medical Needs

Specific medical needs can be managed on an individual basis. Contact the school nurse or principal if you need assistance in this area. If your child requires medical personnel to accompany them on the bus, please contact the school nurse or principal so that they can coordinate arrangements with the Pupil Transportation Department.

F. Bus Ridership

In general, only students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with transportation are allowed to ride special education buses. Siblings of transported special education students may not ride without an IEP or a 504 plan with transportation services. Parents/guardians are generally not permitted on the bus;

however, there may be times when a parent/guardian may need to assist with loading or unloading a special education student.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The safe and efficient transportation of your student depends on the shared cooperation and efforts of you as the parent/guardian, the Office of Special Education, the Pupil Transportation Department, Durham School Services, the school staff, and the student themself. The following section outlines some of the responsibilities of those involved.

A. Parent Responsibility

- Assist the school by submitting accurate and timely information to be included in the Transportation Request Form. Incorrect and untimely information delays the onset of transportation services. This includes childcare information.
- Inform the school of any medical condition which might affect the student's safety or health on the bus.
- Provide up-to-date emergency information to the school and Pupil Transportation Department.
- Assure that the student is fully clothed in weather-appropriate layers, fully toileted, and ready to meet the bus five minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time. Buses are scheduled to arrive within a few minutes of the designated time each day. The driver is not required to wait for a tardy student, as this creates late pickup times for other students.
- Assure that an authorized person will be at the bus stop on time when the child is dropped off so the driver can make custodial transfer to another responsible person.
- Notify Durham School Services at 907-885-3561, option 1, daily when your child will not need transportation services.
- Teach your child the school bus safety rules and appropriate bus riding behavior.
- Inform the school and your student's teacher in advance if you have a change of address or telephone number. If the address change requires rescheduling transportation, a minimum of ten working days may be needed to establish a new route and time schedule.

B. Special Education Office Responsibilities

- Inform the Pupil Transportation Department of any special transportation arrangements that may be necessary.
- Update the information contained on the Transportation Request Form when necessary. An additional form should be submitted if the pickup/drop off location changes during the school year.
- Submit timely and accurate updates to the Pupil Transportation Department at the end of each year to assist in routing and scheduling for the following year. This includes daycare information when applicable.

C. Pupil Transportation Department Responsibilities

- Assign each eligible student to a bus. No one may assign a student to a bus or reassign a student to a different bus without permission from the Pupil Transportation Department.
- Curb-to-curb service determines the bus stop locations according to the physical needs of the student and accessibility of the residence.

- Route and schedule special needs buses. The routing and scheduling plan will ensure the safest and most effective use of the bus. Beyond the onset of the school year, a minimum of ten working days may be needed to establish a new route and schedule and pickup/drop off changes.
- Provide the appropriate student details to Durham School Services for driver route books.
- Establish transportation procedures, rules, and regulations.

D. Durham School Services Responsibilities

- Provide the appropriate training and screening for bus drivers and attendants.
- Be on-time for pickup and drop off. Drivers are not required to wait for a student who is not exiting the home or waiting outside when the bus arrives. This procedure must be adhered to because of the number of students to be transported in a fixed period.
- Notify families of any changes to route that affect a student's pick up or drop off time by more than 5 minutes.
- Understand and support the privacy and confidentiality of the families whose children they transport.
- Ensure the overall safe operations of the bus.
- Maintain an emergency evacuation plan, listing each passenger, for use by medical personnel in the event of a vehicle accident.
- Report any significant changes in a child's behavior to school administration.
- Complete and submit a Student Conduct Report if a behavior problem occurs or persists on the bus.
- At the school, it is the administrator's responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements to assist the driver in loading and unloading students.

E. School Responsibilities

- Work with the Special Education Office in the formulation of admission, review, decision, and completion of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Upon completion of the IEP, the case manager will submit a Transportation Request Form to the Pupil Transportation Department.
- Assure that students are ready for dismissal at the time established.
- Notify parents of schedule changes that may affect pupil transportation (i.e. early dismissals, inclement weather, school closures, etc.).
- Provide arrangements for those students needing assistance in boarding and disembarking from the bus at school.
- Notify the Pupil Transportation Department of any changes that affect a student's bus. Examples may include the student trialing a regular education bus, moving from the district, transitioning to another school, or is no longer in need of transportation services.

F. Student Responsibility

- We expect all students to follow the bus safety rules for the safety of your student and others who ride the school bus.

SCHOOL BUS SERVICE

In special education, transportation is a related service and may be included as a part of your child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The Pupil Transportation Department personnel are responsible for developing all school bus routes. School bus drivers or the

District's transportation contractors are not authorized to alter routes without prior approval of the Pupil Transportation Department.

A. Special Education Transportation & Boundary Exemptions

Students who require special education services that are not available at their boundary school do not have to apply for a boundary exemption and will be placed in the program, by the District's Student Support Services Department, at the nearest school with the appropriate services.

If a student's IEP services can be provided in the student's boundary school, transportation will be provided to that school only. If the child chooses to go to a school outside her or his boundary, the parent must fill out the standard boundary exemption form and provide their own transportation.

B. Transportation Address

To maintain continuity for all students on a route, all students will be picked up at and delivered to the same address every day; morning and afternoon addresses may be different but are to be consistent each day of the week. If a child is to be picked up or delivered at an address other than the residence of the parent or guardian, the child's teacher must notify the special education routing specialist by noon on Friday for changes to go into effect on the following Wednesday. All pickup and delivery addresses must be within the boundary of either the child's home school or the busing boundary of the District placement program for the child. We are not able to change addresses temporarily. If transportation is provided to and from your home address, please ensure that the address is displayed on the outside of the house and is easily seen from the street.

C. Joint or Shared Custody

If one parent resides in the attendance area, and one does not, the parent in the attendance area will receive busing, the parent outside the attendance area must provide transport.

If both parents live outside of the attendance area, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Student Support, each parent must provide transportation.

D. Location of Bus Stops

Bus stops will be designated at locations within a reasonable distance from the child's home. Every effort is made to establish stops in safe and convenient locations. Bus service will be curb-to-curb as per Alaska State Statutes. However, safety will always take precedence over other criteria. Curb to curb is defined as the intersection of your driveway and the road it intersects.

The entire route must be over regularly maintained roads having at least a gravel surface, which are under the supervision and all-weather maintenance of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the State of Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) or local municipality. The bus will not travel on private roads or roads with steep grades. Adequate turnaround space for transportation vehicles must be available on the route.

During Alaskan winters, snow berms may decrease the width of streets and the turning radius in cul-de-sacs. Your child's pick-up point may need to be relocated if the bus cannot safely negotiate certain streets; however, every effort will be made to

keep the stop as close to the pickup or delivery address as is safely possible. Cars parked in cul-de-sacs and on narrow streets also create problems for school bus access. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough and its contractors have been cooperative in removing snow when notified that a child is on a special education bus route requiring curb-to-curb service. All bus stops are subject to the approval of the Pupil Transportation Department.

PICK-UP PROCEDURE

All children must be ready for pick-up five minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Buses must operate on a definite schedule to provide consistent service, and for schools to start on time. Special Education Buses will wait only one minute after the scheduled pick-up time at the end of the driveway and then continue on the route. The bus will not depart from your stop until it is the designated pick-up time. Your child must be ready on time. If the bus is required to wait for each child on the route, the bus will be late for school. The parent or guardian is responsible for assisting the child from the house to the bus in the morning, and from the bus to the house in the evening. Drivers/attendants will not come to your door. Parents should anticipate some fluctuation in these times throughout the year and you will be notified if your child's pick-up is changed by more than five minutes from the previous schedule. If a student does not show up three consecutive days without calling Durham at 907-885-3561, option #1, the bus will discontinue service until a phone call is received, reinstating the bus service. This could take up to three days to take effect.

A. Delivery of Pupils

No child will be permitted to leave a bus at a point other than the school or designated bus stop. If the parent is unable to meet the bus and has not made other arrangements to have a responsible person receive their child at the designated drop-off point, the bus driver will take the child back to school, where the parents must pick up the child as soon as possible. If no one is available at the school, the child will be transported to the Alaska State Troopers. Please provide the individual designated to receive your child with written permission to do so. School bus drivers require that the designee provide identification.

Continued problems with the delivery of your child will result in the discontinuation of transportation services.

B. Unattended Drop-Off

All students must be met by an adult unless the child's Individual Educational Program indicates that an unattended drop-off is appropriate and an Authorization to Release Form has been filled out by a guardian and provided to the contractor.

C. Proper Dress

During periods of inclement or extremely cold weather, make certain that your child is dressed appropriately, as the door on the bus is opened and closed many times during the course of a route. On wheelchair buses the door is open for a long period of time while the lift is in operation. Buses occasionally break down and can be without heat until another bus is dispatched.

D. Moving or Changing Addresses

1. **During the school year**
   Should it be necessary to change your child's pick-up or drop-off point during the school year, it will be necessary to contact the child's school. The child's teacher will submit the appropriate information to the special education router by noon on Friday. The Pupil Transportation Department will usually be able to process the change by the following Wednesday. It is important to request a change of address as early as possible so that transportation is not interrupted. Any change generally affects all students on the route, so sufficient time must be allowed for drivers to learn the new route and notify parents of changes. Holidays and school closures may slightly alter the typical Friday-to-Wednesday schedule. Due to the large number of students transported, the District is not able to change addresses temporarily for parents who wish to take vacations or plan to be away for short periods of time during the school year.

2. **During the summer months**
   The Transportation Department begins developing school bus routes during the month of June for the following school year. If you move during the summer months or must make daycare arrangements, do so early so that service is assured on the first day of school. Any changes requested after the first week in August may result in a delay in transportation for the beginning of the school year. During summer months only, can changes be reported to the Pupil Transportation Department at 907-761-4357.

E. Route Changes

Changes in buses, routes, time of pick-up and / or delivery may be made throughout the school year as a result of student additions, withdrawals or address changes. The first six to eight weeks of school will generally have the most fluctuation. After the initial adjustment period at the start of school, parents will be notified if the child's pick-up or delivery time is adjusted more than five minutes or is moved to another route. The driver, or attendant, is responsible for notifying a parent if the pick-up or delivery time change is greater than five minutes. Buses may run later during days of unfavorable conditions such as snow and ice.

F. Illness

Please notify Durham at 907-885-3561, option #1, and the school if you do not intend to send your child to school. Children who are obviously ill will not be transported. Please keep a sick child at home. If a child becomes ill at school, the parent is responsible for transporting the child home. If your child will be out of school for more than three days, please notify Durham. Three days' notice may be required to reinstate transportation for periods exceeding 20 school days.

G. Medication

Students may not carry medication on the bus. All medication must be delivered to the school by the parents.

H. Personal Hygiene

If you are in the process of toilet training your child, please remember the bus ride can be long. Give your child the opportunity to use the bathroom before leaving home.

I. Personal Articles

Each item a child takes to school should be clearly marked. In case of lost articles, check with your school or the contractor. However, the bus driver and the school will not be responsible for personal belongings.

J. Special Requirements

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school nurse and the Pupil Transportation Department of a particular special requirement, such as safety vests, oxygen, etc. A Transportation Request Form will be completed by the nurse and forwarded to the Pupil Transportation Department prior to initiation of school bus service.

K. Wheelchairs

Students needing wheelchair transportation must be in wheelchairs designed and capable of being transported on standard school buses. Wheelchairs must be easily secured within the bus, and not require modifications to be made to the bus. The wheelchairs must also adjust to the normal system used to secure wheelchairs in buses. Students in wheelchairs not meeting these requirements may be denied transportation service due to the potential danger to themselves or other students. Each wheelchair must be equipped with functioning and properly maintained brakes. Motorized wheelchairs must utilize spill proof batteries and must be operated manually while loading and unloading. Non-operating chairs will not be transported.

L. Child Safety Restraint Systems

The District uses shoulder strap seatbelts that are adjustable for all sizes of students. For those students who require additional support, a four-point restraint system (safety vest) is available if a seatbelt is not sufficient support for a student. Information and requests regarding safety equipment may be obtained by contacting your child's teacher, the contractor, or the Pupil Transportation Department. Safety vests are sized by child's chest size.

M. Oxygen

Oxygen bottles, if not properly secured, can present a safety hazard on the school bus. If your child requires oxygen during transportation, please contact the Pupil Transportation Department at 907-761-4357. Arrangements for securing the oxygen bottle and any special training for the driver and attendant will be arranged by the Transportation Department. If your child is semi-dependent on oxygen, please notify the service provider on the days that oxygen will be transported so that the driver and attendant have the proper securement devices on board the bus.

N. School Bus Accidents

Although school buses are the safest form of ground transportation, accidents do happen. If your child's special education bus is involved in an accident, you will be notified by the contractor as soon as possible following the accident. When an accident is reported to the dispatcher, he/she will make all necessary contacts in the following order: police, paramedics, school principal and Pupil Transportation. Parents will be notified as soon as possible after information is available regarding the nature of the accident.

O. Service Difficulties

In the event of a problem with bus service, or if you have any questions regarding your child's transportation, please contact the contractor and the school principal

first. All routing inquiries such as arrival time of a bus or reporting an illness, should be directed to the dispatch office of the transportation contractor. If problems persist, or you are not satisfied with the service provided, contact the Pupil Transportation Department at 907-761-4357. It is important that you provide as much information as possible regarding a complaint. Information such as dates and times of incidents, as well as the names of the people who have been contacted, will assist District personnel in solving problems.

REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO TRANSPORTATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

14.30.347 Transportation of Exceptional Children
When transportation is required to be provided as related services, exceptional children shall be carried with other children, except when the nature of their physical or mental disabilities is such that it is in the best interest of the exceptional children, as determined by the school district, that they be transported separately.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHARTER
TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

Last Updated: 2026-2027

CHARTER TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

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PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

All school sponsored charter trips will be scheduled using a web-based program, Trip Tracker. The Pupil Transportation Department's goal is to provide safe, pleasant transportation for students and sponsors.

TRIP SUPERVISION

A. Only students participating in the charter trip may be transported to and from the event on the charter bus.

B. At least one adult, other than the driver, must be present on the bus to assist in monitoring student behavior, coordinate transportation arrangements with the driver, advise school officials when students will arrive late to their destination, or when serious problems occur during the trip.

C. The charter driver's authority supersedes the trip supervisor's when there is a question related to the operation of the bus/vehicle, and/or the safety of the students while transporting or continuing/discontinuing the trip due to weather or road conditions.

D. It is the trip supervisor's responsibility to keep a manifest (or roster) of students.

CHARTER DRIVER'S ROLE

A. The bus driver oversees the vehicle, making sure the vehicle is in proper condition for travel, and is responsible for checking the weather and road conditions during the trip. When facing unusual or unsafe conditions, the driver must immediately contact dispatch (or the designated after-hours person). The driver and the coordinator will evaluate the situation together to decide if it is safe to proceed. Following this decision, the coordinator will promptly contact the MSBSD Transportation Department with an official update.

B. Drivers should remember they represent the School District. The driver should operate the vehicle in such a way as to maintain the confidence of the passengers and other drivers on the road.

C. Drivers must assist the trip supervisor in any way possible **(loading and unloading luggage, gear, etc.).** The driver should also assist in making sure all students are aboard the bus by counting the number of students who have boarded.

D. On charter trips, the unexpected should always be expected, i.e., a change in schedule, a change in destination, weather problems, road closures, etc. The charter driver must be flexible and able to make good recommendations and good decisions when necessary.

DRIVER ASSIGNMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

A. Only individuals who have received school bus driver training and are licensed in accordance with District requirements and Alaska State regulations may drive contracted vehicles with students on board.

B. Contracted drivers may not drive on charter trips if the assignment of the charter requires a substitute driver for the driver's home-to-school bus run unless approved by the Pupil Transportation Department.

C. Only experienced drivers will be eligible to drive long-distance trips (outside the local and Anchorage area). Experienced drivers are identified as being trained and licensed drivers who have driven school buses locally for at least one year on an active basis, or other comparable experience acceptable to the District.

SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following applies to all charter drivers and staff. The driver must:

A. Acquire and maintain a current Alaska Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with school bus endorsement.

B. Maintain a good driving record.

C. Complete any training required by the District and/or Alaska State Department of Education, i.e., driver training, first-aid training, chaining, attend monthly safety meetings/In-service days, and other related training.

D. Must be mature and able to relate in a positive manner to students and school representatives.

E. Must be familiar with all vehicle types that are available for charter trips and be able to chain a bus during adverse weather/road conditions.

F. Must be fully trained and willing to secure a wheelchair in a wheelchair equipped bus. The driver must also be fully trained and willing to secure a child in a safety vest. Must also be trained in emergency evacuation procedures when transporting wheelchairs.

G. Must be willing to work shifts which may fall on Saturdays and Sundays and may vary from day to day.

H. The charter driver shall provide safe and pleasant transportation services for students and school staff when traveling on curricular and extra-curricular charters.

I. Charter drivers are expected to follow the policies and operating procedures specified in the handbook.

WORK SCHEDULES

A. Duty Hours: Duty hours are those hours the driver is expected to be on duty. They begin at the time the driver checks in at the Bus Barn and end when the driver checks out of the Bus Barn. All duty hours are paid hours.

B. Duty Hours - Local Trips: **The driver must return to the bus barn and not remain with the group on standby status unless authorized to do so by the trip supervisor or "request to stay" is noted on the trip ticket.**

C. Duty Hours - Long Distance/Multi-Day Trips: If the trip is out of the local area, either a one-day trip or a multi-day trip, the driver may not be actively driving more than 15 hours. The driver may be given off-duty time (time off, splitting the 15-hour work schedule). The driver must remain in off-duty status for a minimum of eight hours after a 15-hour driving schedule (refer to Alaska DOT regulations on Hours of Service).

D. Trip supervisors may authorize off-duty hours during periods of time when the driver is not needed. Lodging must be provided for the driver during off-duty status. During a multiple day trip, a driver is guaranteed a minimum of six paid hours per day when on standby. Actual hours must still be accounted for and may be less than six hours.

E. Authorized standby time for local and long-haul trips should be utilized for cleaning and/or organizing the bus, therefore making good use of paid "on duty" status.

F. Pay Hours: All duty hours are paid hours and begin at the assigned check-in time, which is 20 minutes prior to the time the driver is scheduled to leave the Bus Barn. Time ends 15 minutes after the driver returns to the Bus Barn at the end of the trip or at the time the driver checks out, whichever is less.

G. Home-to-school or school-to-home routes must not overlap on a charter trip sheet. Route time/mileage **ends** at the trip origin (school) and charter time/mileage **begins** at the trip origin (school). *These times should not overlap on driver's DBR and Trip Ticket.*

PASSENGER MANAGEMENT

A. Student bus rules for an elementary field trip usually differ from home-to-school rules. On field trips and long-distance trips, the driver may expect eating, group singing, sleeping, and many "pit stops." However, the behavior of the students cannot affect the driver's ability to operate the vehicle.

B. Before beginning each trip, the driver will explain to the passengers the basic bus ridership rules, evacuation procedures, how to use seat belts (if provided), and location and use of emergency equipment. Basic rules include:

1. Stay seated when the bus is moving.

2. No gambling (District policy).

3. No smoking, vaping, chewing, or spitting of tobacco.

4. No possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs.

5. No sound equipment (radio, stereo, etc.) except when used with headsets or with driver's permission.

C. The trip supervisor, coach, teacher, or other school personnel are responsible for the control and discipline of students and are accountable to the school and to parents for the behavior and welfare of the students. Students are accountable to their coaches and teachers and know they must respect their authority. If student behavior inhibits the safe operation of the bus or affects the driver adversely, the driver should advise the trip supervisor. **Trip supervisors must enforce student conduct rules. If necessary, the driver may stop the bus while the coach, teacher, etc., correct any behavioral problems, and proceed again when it is safe to do so.**

OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. The Pupil Transportation Department will provide trip requests to the contractor that contain all pertinent trip information and should be attached to the driver's trip ticket. Every trip, including side trips, are part of the itinerary, i.e., restaurants, shopping malls, emergency stops, etc. The driver should familiarize himself/herself with the probable route and bus-parking site at the trip destination by studying maps and reviewing the trip ticket instructions with the contractor. If the driver does not understand all of the instructions, the driver should get clarification from the contractor before beginning the trip.

B. Whenever possible, all charter buses transporting groups to the same destination should travel together.

C. It is important that groups be transported back to school at the scheduled time. Students on local (day trips) must return to school in time to board home-to-school buses for the trip home. On local trips, the driver should make the trip supervisors aware of the time the group must begin the trip back to school. If circumstances do not permit the return to school on time, the driver must advise dispatch as soon as it is apparent that the group will not arrive back to school on time. Dispatch must then notify the MSBSD Transportation Department.

D. On long distance trips, the driver must notify the Pupil Transportation Department or supervisor should the group be returning more than two hours after the scheduled time. It is the responsibility of the trip supervisor to notify the school.

E. If at any time the group being transported does not show up at the scheduled time to board the bus, the driver must notify the contractor. The contractor will then notify the Pupil Transportation Department.

F. The driver should take a head count of passengers before the trip and each time passengers re-board the bus. If passengers are missing, or if additional passengers are present, the driver should alert the trip supervisor. The driver should also make sure that he/she knows when the trip supervisor wants the bus back for pick-up should the bus and driver leave the drop point while the group is away from the bus.

G. Family members and friends of the driver are not allowed to accompany the driver on charters unless those family members and friends are members of the school group being transported. Additionally, only certified service animals may be transported.

H. Drivers must complete all trip ticket information completely and accurately. Trip supervisors are required to sign the trip ticket following the completion of the trip. It is important that all information is accurate. The first two to three digits of the odometer reading can be dropped as long as the full reading is entered at the beginning and the end of the trip. The driver's name and vehicle asset number must be noted on the trip ticket.

I. For all day events, students should remove all personal items from the bus in order for the driver to log off and be away from the bus.

HOURS OF TRAVEL

Due to limited services along Alaska highways and our extreme winter weather conditions, hours of operation will be restricted to 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. during the months of October through April and 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. May through September. Buses will not be scheduled to depart prior to 5:00 a.m. Evening travel must be scheduled so that buses have reached their destination by 12:00 a.m. or 1:00 a.m. **The table below outlines the cutoff for afternoon and evening departure times.**

Travel to or From	Spring & Fall	Winter
Fairbanks/North Pole	8:00 p.m./5:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
Delta Junction	5:30 p.m.	4:30 p.m.
Valdez	6:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
Homer	7:00 p.m./4:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
Kenai/Soldotna	8:30 p.m.	7:30 p.m.

LOADING AND UNLOADING PASSENGERS

A. When loading or unloading at schools, charter vehicles may not pass home-to-school buses that are in the process of loading or unloading.

B. With the approval of the trip supervisor, the driver may unload passengers from the bus at any point during the trip. However, the driver must pull completely off the roadway where there is ample room for the vehicle and where it is safe to unload passengers. Passengers may not be unloaded on the highway or on the shoulder of the roadway, except in an emergency. If the passengers disembark on the shoulder of the road, the driver must use the hazard warning lights.

C. Drivers must be sure that students have completely cleared the area around the bus before moving the bus. Drivers must also be sure that other vehicles, pedestrians, etc., are not in the buses' safety zone when moving around in loading/unloading and parking areas.

D. Students who have a seatbelt (SB) or safety vest (S/V) mandated in their I.E.P. paperwork must use the same equipment while on charter trips. When requesting a charter bus, please clearly note these specific transportation requirements. Drivers will be advised of any special transportation requirements prior to the trip.

E. State regulations set maximum passenger load limits on school buses. It is the responsibility of the school and the trip supervisor to ensure that the number of passengers does not exceed the passenger capacity. It is imperative that school trip coordinators communicate with the Pupil Transportation Department regarding passenger numbers and bus capacity when arranging a charter.

F. State regulations prohibit blocking the walkway, emergency exits, and service exits with luggage or other items. *The driver may not transport passengers with any of the above areas blocked.* Outside storage compartments should be used when possible.

G. If passengers come to the bus with dirt, mud, or other grit on clothes or shoes after a field trip, have them clean themselves off as much as possible before boarding. If items gathered during the trip cannot be transported safely, the driver should inform the trip supervisor that the items may not be transported.