

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

BOOK I  
BASIC PROCEDURES  
(Revised July 2008)

Material compiled from: Florida State Board of Education - Administrative Rules  
Alachua County School Board Policies  
SBAC Bus Driver's Handbook

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Transportation is an important function of public school education. The major objective of the Transportation Department of the School Board of Alachua County is to safely and promptly transport eligible students to and from school on a regularly scheduled basis. A secondary objective is to provide transportation for student field trips and extracurricular activities whenever possible.

To provide cost-effective service, the objectives and responsibilities of the Transportation Department must be known and understood by all persons within the system. The purpose of this procedures handbook is to outline transportation rules and responsibilities and provide special information to persons using the services of the department.

## **II. BUS RIDING ELIGIBILITY AND EXCEPTIONS**

Alachua County public school students who live two miles or more from the school to which they are assigned, may ride a school bus without cost. Exceptions to this two-mile limit are granted only at the discretion of the School Board of Alachua County. Exceptions for justifiable reasons are sometimes made in the interest of the safety of particular groups of students. Other exceptions are made to meet the special needs of physically handicapped students. Requests for physically handicapped student exceptions are submitted directly to the Director of Transportation and must be substantiated by a physician's statement.

No special transportation is available for students with zoning exceptions. Parents of students attending school under a zoning exception must provide transportation to and from school.

Other persons eligible for school bus transportation are:

- A. Substitute drivers in training.
- B. Teachers or other employees who are supervising class activities.
- C. Chaperones authorized to accompany field trips or extracurricular activities.

## **III. PARENT AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Transportation is a student privilege, not necessarily a "right." Parents and students must assume that transportation privileges are contingent on acceptable student behavior aboard buses. Parents are responsible for:

- A. Student arriving at bus stops on time.
- B. The safety of students to and from pick-up points.
- C. Student conduct and safety while waiting for the bus.

Drivers are not permitted to wait at bus stops for late arrivals. It is suggested that students arrive at bus stops not more than ten minutes and not less than five minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time

Students ride assigned buses to and from school. Students may not be assigned to more than one bus. Students are loaded and unloaded from buses only at assigned bus stops. A written request from the student's parent, signed by the school principal, must be presented to the driver each day a student is authorized to get off the bus at any stop other than that student's regular stop. Exceptions to bus

assignments are limited to cases of an emergency nature. Parents must assume responsibility for their children when requests for exceptions are granted.

#### **IV. STUDENT RULES FOR RIDING SCHOOL BUSES**

The privilege of riding a school bus is contingent on good student behavior and observance of the following rules. The bus driver will report students who repeatedly violate bus rules to the school principal.

- A. The driver is in full charge of the bus and the students. Students shall promptly obey the driver.
- B. Students are directed to stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- C. Students must be at the bus stop on time; buses will not wait for those who are tardy.
- D. The school bus driver will develop a seating chart, and students will be required to sit according to the seating chart each day. If necessary to promote order on the bus, bus drivers have the authority to assign students to seats.
- E. Students must remain seated when the bus is in motion.
- F. Students must keep arms and heads inside the windows.
- G. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is dangerous. Students should remain quiet.
- H. Other than ordinary conversation, classroom conduct is to be observed at all times while aboard the bus.
- I. No eating, drinking, smoking or other use of tobacco is allowed on the bus.
- J. Students who must cross the road before boarding the bus should wait until the bus has arrived and then cross the road ten feet in front of the bus, not behind it. Drivers will signal the student to cross the road after the traffic in both directions has stopped. Students are not allowed to cross roads with more than two lanes of traffic.
- K. Students who must cross the road after departing from the bus should walk ten feet in front of the bus and not behind it. Drivers will assure that the way is clear before students are released to cross the road. Students will cross the road when signaled by the driver.
- L. Students will ride only their assigned buses to and from school. The driver will not permit a student to get off the bus at other than his regular stop without written permission from the parent or principal. Parents assume the responsibility for the student when such a request is made and granted.
- M. Damage to school buses or property through neglect, misconduct, or willful acts shall be paid for by the student, his parent, or guardian. Payment for damage must be made to the School Board of Alachua County within ten days after billing. When payment is not received within

ten days, the student(s) responsible for the damage will be suspended from riding a school bus until satisfactory settlement has been made.

- N. Band instruments too large to fit under a bus seat or held in lap of student; cages, large posters, firearms, knives, glass bottles, animals, reptiles, skate boards, etc., are not allowed aboard the bus at any time.
- O. Bus drivers will report flagrant student misbehavior to the principal in writing and the principal will take appropriate action.
- P. Repeated misbehavior may result in temporary or permanent suspension of bus riding privileges.

Transportation Conduct Report Forms will be used when necessary for a bus driver to submit written reports of student misbehavior on the bus. School officials will take appropriate action with the student, report this action on the Conduct Report Form, and distribute copies to the driver, student's parents, and the Transportation Department. This form may also be used to indicate bus suspension: however, a formal suspension letter (STU878.022) must also be submitted to the parent and to the office of the Assistant Superintendent.

Under certain conditions, a school principal may recommend that the bus riding privileges be suspended for the entire remainder of the school year. After due process, the School Board of Alachua County may take final action. Board procedures for suspending student bus riding privileges are presented in appendix A, page 5, of this manual.

Students and parents of students accepting the "privilege" of riding a School Board of Alachua County school bus understand and grant their permission that cameras may be used to monitor behavior on the school bus and may be used for disciplinary action.

## **V. ESTABLISHING SCHOOL BUS ROUTES**

The following basic principles are used to establish or change school bus routes:

- A. Routes are planned and adjusted to school bus capacity, and so that no students are required to cross more than two lanes of traffic.
- B. Bus routes shall serve eligible students who live in areas where transportation by school bus is the most economical method of providing educational opportunity.
- C. Spur routes from main trunk routes will not be made for students who live less than one and one-half miles from a main route. Exceptions may be made for physically handicapped students, or safety reasons as directed by the School Board.
- D. Routes will not be extended to serve students who live within reasonable walking distance to their assigned school or designated route.
- E. School bus travel is contingent upon city, county, or state road maintenance.
- F. Pupil loading stops shall be established no less than one-fourth mile apart. Bus stops will be limited - whenever possible, pupils from several homes shall meet at a central point for group pick up.

## **VI. BUS DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS**

All bus drivers share the important responsibility of transporting a very special cargo - the students of Alachua County schools. Qualifications for drivers include, but are not limited to the following:

Each school bus driver must hold both a valid Florida Class B CDL license and meet the requirements of the Florida Administrative Code, section 6A-3.014.

## **VII. USING SCHOOL BUSES FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Activities**

While the primary purpose of school buses is to transport eligible students to and from school, School Board of Alachua County policy permits the use of school buses for field trips and extra curricular activities.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are school-sponsored off-campus group learning activities which supplement, extend, or enrich the regular instructional program in a manner not possible within the school setting. Principals of individual school centers approve or disapprove field trips.

### **Extracurricular Trips**

Extra-curricular trips are trips related to school-sponsored extracurricular activities sanctioned by the Florida High School Activities Association and/or school centers approve or disapprove field trips.

Official procedures designed to help district and school staff members implement the Board's policy on field trips and are presented in item VIII below.

## **VIII. PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING FIELD TRIPS AND EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS/ ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

These procedures are issued to assist district and school staff members in the implementation of the policy on field trips.

### **A. Definitions**

Field trips are school-sponsored, off-campus group learning activities which supplement, extend, or enrich the regular instructional program in a manner not possible within the school setting.

Extracurricular trips are trips related to school-sponsored extracurricular activities sanctioned by the Florida High School Activities Association and/or the School Board of Alachua County.

**B. Procedures and Guidelines for Conducting Field Trips and Extracurricular Activity Trips**

1. Trips are to be planned to ensure the safety of students and chaperons, and to keep the risk of liability at a minimum.
2. Field trips made during the school day must have sufficient educational potential to justify the time taken from the classroom instructional program.
3. Trips that are strictly recreational in nature are not authorized during the regular student/teacher day.
4. Members of the school staff officially supervising and chaperoning students on trips shall have complete knowledge concerning location of every student in the group at all times. "Complete knowledge" does permit entrusting the supervision of small groups of students to non-staff chaperons.
5. All members of the county school system, including students, shall conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times.
6. Written parental permission for student participation in field trips and extracurricular trips is required to be filed in the school prior to departure.
7. A minimum of one chaperon per 30 students is required for all trips.
8. The class, group of students, or team shall depart for the return trip at the earliest practical time following the planned field trip experience, game, contest, or event. Students shall be checked against a master list prior to departure for the return trip. Should any student not be present, a sponsor or other school employee must remain behind until such student(s) have been located, and their safe return assured.
9. A travel list of students and names of chaperons by vehicle, and trip itinerary shall be available in the school office prior to departure.
10. Should it become necessary for emergency help for any student, it will be the principal's responsibility to authorize a teacher or chaperon to seek such help as needed.

**C. Use of School Buses for Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities**

**1. Field Trips on Normal Student Days**

- a. Trips will be planned between the hours of 8:45 AM - 1:30 PM, and after 4:30 PM. only.
- b. Requests for field trips will be made on the on-line Field Trip System and transmitted to the Transportation Department's Field Trip Specialist as soon as a trip is planned. No trip request may be transmitted to the Transportation Department less than ten days prior to the date of the trip.
- c. Schools should be able to confirm their trips on the on-line Field Trip System no later than five days prior to the date of the trip. Schools unable to confirm a trip five days prior to the trip should call the Field Trip Specialist to inquire as to the trip status.

**2. Field Trips on Non-School Days**

- a. There are virtually no limitations as to the number of buses available on non-school days. With proper planning, transportation should be available to meet any reasonable request anywhere in Florida.

- b. Requests for field trips will be made on the on-line Field Trip System and transmitted to the Transportation Department's Field Trip Specialist as soon as a trip is scheduled. No trip request may be transmitted to the Transportation Department less than ten days prior to the date of the trip.
- c. Schools may confirm their trips from the on-line Field Trip System no later than five days prior to the date of the trip. Schools not able to confirm a trip by five days prior to the trip should call the Field Trip Specialist to inquire as to the status of the trip.

3. **Buses for All Athletic Trips**

- a. Buses will be requested on the on-line computer Field Trip System. These requests are to be transmitted to the Transportation Department field Trip Specialist prior to opening of the school year.
- b. Trips will be planned between the hours of 8:45 AM - 1:30 PM, and after 4:30- PM. only.

4. **Rates for All SBAC Schools for In-County and Out-of-County Trips**

- a. Rates are figured on portal-to-portal basis. There is a charge of \$2.00 per mile plus \$25 per hour. Current hourly rates should be obtained each year from the Transportation Department. The school is also required to pay all necessary road toll charges the bus incurs on the trip.
- b. On overnight trips, drivers will be paid for a minimum of eight hours and shall not exceed 14 hours in a 24-hour period. In addition, meals and lodging for the driver will be paid for by the school or sponsoring organization. The payment for meals will be at the rate specified in the current per diem allowances.

**IX. SCHOOL PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

State Board of Education rules define the role of the school principal as related to student transportation:

- A. To assume responsibility under the direction of the superintendent for all disciplinary cases which arise in connection with transportation
- B. To plan the program of the school so that transported students who arrive early or remain late will be under school supervision at all times.
- C. To plan and assign places for students to get on and off school buses at the school, and to ensure the safety of the loading/unloading zone and to provide supervision of students.
- D. To direct school bus emergency evacuation drills on each bus serving the school during the first six weeks of the first semester of the school year.
- E. To provide instruction for all transported students in safe practices on and off the bus during the first six weeks of the first semester of the school year.

- F. To request authority in writing for transportation of students on field trips and activity trips, or other special trips, and to plan such trips in accordance with policies approved by the School Board.
- G. To determine and call parents, when necessary, if a bus is late for any reason.
- H. To determine and call parents, if necessary, due to a school bus accident.

**X. PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS**

Responsibilities for physically handicapped students who are transported at public expense are jointly shared by the School Board, bus drivers, and the parents of the handicapped student. Florida State Board Rules define the responsibilities of all parties as follows:

- A. The school district shall determine what safety measures shall be used in the transportation of students with special transportation needs, including the method of securement or positioning of the student. Such safety measures shall include the designation of roads, bus turning areas, and student stop locations that shall not be left to the discretion of the bus driver or the parents of the student. The district shall provide belt cutters, meeting Florida School Bus Specifications on any school bus equipped with passenger securement or restraint straps.
- B. The district shall provide bus drivers and attendants instructions, in writing, as to any special or non-medical care which a student may need while on the bus. School transportation shall not be provided for students with special transportation needs when parents of such students fail to assume their responsibilities as defined by district policy that shall address appropriate supervision at the bus stop.
- C. Responsibility of the school bus driver and attendants, if used, for students with special transportation needs who are transported at public expense:
  - 1. The driver or attendant of a bus transporting students with special transportation needs shall remain with the bus so that students aboard will be under supervision at all times, except to call for assistance in case of an emergency or accident involving the students or bus.
  - 2. In cases where a student with physical disabilities is unable to leave the area of a student stop without assistance, the school bus driver shall not assume responsibility for such assistance except in an emergency that threatens the safety of such student or students.
  - 3. The driver and attendant shall be provided training related to students with special transportation needs while being transported; however, the driver and attendant shall not give medicine and shall limit his other assistance to that which may normally be expected of a reasonable, prudent person or as specified in the student's Individual Educational Plan.
- D. Responsibilities of parents of students with special transportation needs transported at public expense:
  - 1. Parents shall provide the necessary assistance and protection for their children while enroute to and from the school bus stop and comply with the school bus

schedule. Parents shall provide the necessary supervision of such child at the bus stop in accordance with district policy.

2. In cases when the physical impairment of a student renders the student unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, parents shall provide the necessary assistance for helping their student get on and off at the bus stop if required by district policy.
3. Knowledge, skills and abilities related to student management techniques and characteristics of the students with special transportation needs shall be considered when selecting or assigning drivers and attendants for routes serving the students.

## **XI. COMMERCIAL CREDIT CARD CONTROL**

The Transportation Operations Manager is responsible for issuing and controlling all commercial credit card accounts used by the School Board of Alachua County employees. The only exceptions to this procedure are:

- A: One credit card will be issued on a permanent basis to Camp Crystal Lake because of its remote location. This card will be used to purchase gasoline and oil for assigned vehicles and lawn mowers.
- B. The Superintendent or his designee must approve other exceptions.

With these exceptions, The Transportation Operations Manager issues credit cards to the following:

1. School bus drivers for making necessary approved local purchases when on extended field trips and extracurricular trips;
2. School district staff members who may be required to travel outside of Alachua County in School Board-owned vehicles: and
3. Individuals on a temporary hand-receipt basis.

With the exception of Camp Crystal, credit cards will be returned to the Transportation Operations Manager within 24 hours after completion of the trip, or within 24 hours of the first duty day following a weekend or holiday.

The Director of Transportation must review and approve payment of each credit card purchase slip.

## **XII COUNTY-OWNED VEHICLES ASSIGNED TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

The Director of Transportation is responsible for the maintenance repairs required for all School Board-owned vehicles assigned to other departments. To assist the Transportation Department in accomplishing this task, the following procedures will be adhered to by the various departments:

- A. Vehicles will be delivered to the Transportation Garage on the dates listed in the notification memorandum to the various departments, or when repairs are needed.

- B. At the time of vehicle delivery, the driver will turn in the vehicle keys and work order request to the shop foreman. The work order request will contain all know mechanical discrepancies needing repair. Items the driver is unsure of should be discussed between the shop foreman and vehicle driver.
- C. The shop foreman will pick up vehicles after being notified.
- D. The Transportation Department will keep a set of keys for all School Board vehicles.

Department Directors/Supervisors will be responsible for the following:

- A. Assignment of drivers to the various vehicles;
- B. Ensuring that drivers have a current required vehicle driver's license at all times. These licenses should be checked each week through the Florida Highway Patrol Licensing Division to ensure the license is valid;
- C. Scheduling all vehicle operators for a defensive driving course and ensuring the successful completion of such course;
- D. Ensuring all vehicle operators are required to perform first echelon level of maintenance on the vehicle before and after the vehicle operation.. This level of maintenance includes basically such items as checking all tires for proper inflation; checking fuel; oil and water for proper levels; giving a visual check of engine belts, spark plus wires, battery cables, etc. to detect possible problems; cleanliness of vehicles; spare tires, fire extinguishers, etc.;
- E. Reporting and investigating all vehicle accidents occurring within the department; and
- F. Ensuring that a monthly vehicle trip log is kept in each vehicle using the following guidelines:
  - 1. Each vehicle has a log sheet at all times, and all personnel using said vehicle have been instructed in maintaining the log.
  - 2. The person assigned to the vehicle turns in vehicle logs to the employee's supervisor at the end of each month.
  - 3. The supervisor is to review the vehicle trip log for the following:
    - a. Log is filled out correctly;
    - b. Employee has documented each use of the vehicle.
    - c. Vehicle is not being used for personal reasons, but only for School Board business.
  - 4. The supervisor then files vehicle logs for future reference and audit purposes.
  - 5. All vehicle logs are to be kept a minimum of three years, but shall not be destroyed under any circumstances until an audit has been conducted for that year.

Departments that have vehicles assigned to employees to take home after normal duty hours shall follow the above procedures, including the following:

- 1. Have written justification on file for the reasons the vehicle is used. This justification is to be approved by and filed with the assistant superintendent of the department's division.
- 2. Be sure the mileage from work to home, home to work, and the amount of usage, is documented on the vehicle trip log sheet by the supervisor. The vehicle is not for personal use.

Vehicle Operators are responsible for the following:

- A. Having the required vehicle operator's license in their possession prior to operating the vehicle;
- B. Performing a walk-around inspection of the vehicle and checking such items as tires, brakes, etc., to ensure that items affecting the operation of the vehicle are in operating condition or at acceptable levels;
- C. Refraining from operating the vehicle if the operator feels it is unsafe to do so; reporting mechanical problems needing immediate attention to either his/her supervisor or the bus garage foreman;
- D. Changing flat tires as they occur while away from the compound and bringing the tire into the garage for repairs - this does not apply to vehicles with dual wheels;
- E. Refueling and cleaning the vehicle as needed;
- F. Reporting immediately, all accidents involving other vehicles and involving buildings, fences, etc. accidents involving other vehicles are to be investigated by the appropriate law enforcement agency prior to moving the vehicles;
- G. Operating the vehicle at all times in accordance with the current laws of the State of Florida; and
- H. Keeping the monthly vehicle log up to date.

**XIII. REPLACEMENT OF COUNTY-OWNED VEHICLES**

Vehicles may be replaced per the following suggested schedule where funds are available and with Board approval:

- A. Cars: Six years or 72,000 miles.
- B. Pick-up Trucks: Eight years or 100,000 miles.
- C. Heavy Trucks: Twelve years or 200,000 miles.
- D. School Buses: Twelve years or 200,000 miles

**XIV. SUMMARY**

This Transportation Procedures Manual is designed to outline procedures, rules, and responsibilities, as well as to provide special information to persons using the services of the Transportation Department. To the extent that all persons know and practice these procedures, rules, and responsibilities, the department's major objectives of promptness and safely transporting eligible students to and from school will be met.