



**2025-2026  
School-Based Bus  
Handbook**

**Escambia County Public Schools**  
<http://www.escambiayellow.com>

## **About This Handbook**

This handbook is intended to assist principals, school-based bus coordinators, and school-based bus operators in resolving the more common transportation-related issues they encounter. If you have questions regarding any of the content or if you would like to make suggestions about material to include in the handbook, please feel free to contact the District Athletic Director with your questions or thoughts. Please bear in mind the document is updated regularly, so while you might keep a copy on your desktop, the most current version will always be posted to the Transportation Department website at [www.escambiyellow.com](http://www.escambiyellow.com).

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**Section 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

- In This Section –**
- Challenge and Responsibility
  - School-Based Buses in General

**1.1 – Challenge and Responsibility**

The world was once a simpler place, and by “once” we mean just a few years ago. Today, tragic events with students – children – as victims dominate the news. The imperative for those who care for them is to be in tune with the threats and hazards and to develop and implement policies and procedures that will anticipate issues and protect students.

The Escambia County Public Schools has been very fortunate in that while it has seen its share of “near misses,” it has not seen tragedy of the magnitude other districts have. However, we should never make the mistake of thinking it can’t or won’t happen here.

This is an era of turnkey teenagers and non-custodial parents. Knowing to whom we can release children, where, and when is not as easy a decision as it was only a few years ago, and we have to appreciate and consider that

fact. A few years ago there wasn't such a large difference between a "reasonable" decision and a "responsible" decision. Oftentimes today, the gap between the two is much larger. It's a part of the reality we must not only accept, we have to almost embrace it if we're to anticipate all of the potential pitfalls along the way.

This Handbook is designed to assist you in making those critical decisions and to provide you the very best guidance to ensure your trips start and end the way you want them to.

Ultimately, the requirements articulated in Federal Regulations, Florida Statutes, Escambia County Public School Board Rules, Transportation SOP, and this Handbook are compulsory. The District cannot permit operation of its school buses outside of these parameters. It is critical that administrators who accept custody of school buses recognize that and ensure full compliance with those requirements or decline the opportunity to have buses staged on their campus for student activity trips.

## 1.2 – School-Based Buses in General

Escambia County School Board Rules require that activity and curricular trips not interfere with the normal transportation of students to and from school. In order to accommodate non-curricular event scheduling and transportation needs while also meeting the requirement to transport 24,000 students to and from school every day, the Director of Transportation has authorized the issuance of reliable school buses to schools for use as school-based buses.

Every one of those buses meets or exceeds federal and state laws relating to safety, security, vehicle emissions, and reliability. Furthermore, every District school bus in service is subjected to a rigorous and thorough safety and serviceability inspection every month. Buses will not be released for student

transportation unless they are safe and serviceable.

An essential part of the vehicle maintenance effort is the proper care of buses between inspection dates. It is an essential element because when buses are not exercised regularly and are not inspected before and after every trip, the chance of a roadside breakdown increases dramatically.

## Section 2

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### In This Section –

- General Accountability
- Care of the Bus
- Pre-Trip Planning & Preparation
- Trip Safety
- Student Management & Leadership

#### 2.1 – General Accountability

##### 2.1.1 – General

The Transportation Department often permits schools to assume temporary custody of school buses to be used as activity buses for their convenience. In some instances, activity buses will be kept at a District garage where they may be checked in and out when needed. These buses shall be operated only by District employees who possess valid CDL licenses, maintain current CDL physicals, have been trained and certified to operate District school buses, and have attended annual in-service training during the current school year.

Note: Schools shall not charter or loan school-based buses to non-District entities, nor shall they loan them to other schools or departments for a fee. School-based activity buses shall be used to transport registered District students on official school business only.

Note: Activity buses shall not be utilized in a manner that violates the ESP Master Contract, specifically with regard to provisions governing activity trips. Schools shall verify with the Transportation Department that no school bus operators are available to handle a curricular trip before deciding to utilize a school-based bus and driver.

District vehicles shall only be used in the conduct of District, state, or auxiliary and

enterprise business, and in accordance with School Board Rules. Only District employees may drive District vehicles except as specifically authorized by the Director of Transportation.

##### 2.1.2 – School Principals

School-based school buses have substantial monetary and utility value to the District. The school principal is responsible and accountable for ensuring school-based buses entrusted to his or her custody are cared for and operated in a manner consistent with policies and procedures pertaining to school bus operation.

Principals shall ensure all volunteers have been approved to serve in that capacity by the District and only after they have obtained the required background check clearance.

Principals shall ensure all staff members and volunteers involved in school bus transportation activities have read and understand the contents of this Handbook.

Principals shall appoint a single point-of-contact, normally the athletic director in high schools, to act as school-based bus coordinator. This official shall be the liaison between the school and the Transportation Department for school-based bus matters.

##### 2.1.3 – School-Based Bus Coordinators

Accountability also falls to the school's single point-of-contact for school-based buses (in high schools, the athletic director is normally the school-based bus coordinator).

The bus coordinator ensures (among other things):

- the requirements established for the operation of school-based buses are met;

- [pre-trip and post-trip inspections](#) are conducted and documented on the appropriate form;
- buses meet their inspection dates and are clean and have necessary documentation for inspection delivery and that fuel keys are presented for exchange;
- all loaner buses are fueled and clean prior to return to the garage and that fuel keys are presented for exchange;
- all bus use has been authorized by appropriate authority;
- buses are exercised;
- any unusual or problematic school bus operation issues are reported to the Garage Manager or the Director of Transportation; and
- a listing of school-based bus trips sent to the [MShasteen@ecsdfl.us](mailto:MShasteen@ecsdfl.us) GPS Specialist, with a cc to [MBrooks@ecsdfl.us](mailto:MBrooks@ecsdfl.us) Garage Secretary, and the District Athletic Director under the subject line "School-Based Bus Trips – [NAME OF SCHOOL] – Week of [WEEK DATES MONDAY THROUGH SUNDAY]" is sent weekly. The report shall include a listing of all trips utilizing school-based buses that will (or will possibly) be on the road after 6:00 PM and be sent by close of business on the prior Friday utilizing the template provided to them on the [Listing of School-Based Bus Trips](#) form.

#### **2.1.4 – School-Based School Bus Operators**

District school bus operators perform their bus operator function under the purview of a District permit issued by the Director of Transportation under authority granted by the State of Florida. The Director of Transportation may rescind or suspend the bus operator credentials of bus operators who fail to meet requirements. He or she may also assign bus operators for retraining when necessary. Misconduct while operating a school bus may result in disciplinary action.

The school-based bus operator who operates a bus during a trip is solely accountable for the safe operation of the vehicle, the safety of the students on board, and compliance with this and other applicable policies and procedures pertaining to school bus operation.

Any District employee who drives a District-owned vehicle accepts responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of the vehicle. Drivers must exercise good common sense and treat county vehicles with care and respect. Abuse of county vehicles will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of each employee who is assigned and operating a vehicle to obey all traffic laws and regulations and all District Rules.

The operator of the bus driving in support of an activity or other school function is, in his or her role as school bus operator, answerable to the Director of Transportation. School buses shall be operated as stipulated without exception.

Other policies and procedures may be found in the [School Bus Operator & Assistant Handbook](#) (found under Bus Employee Resources on the Transportation Department website at [www.escambiayellow.com](http://www.escambiayellow.com)), [School Board Rules](#), and the [Florida CDL Handbook](#). Bus operators may also contact the Transportation Training and Safety Manager regarding any matter of concern or interest not addressed in those documents.

## **2.2 – Care of the Bus**

### **2.2.1 – Bus Operator [Pre-/Post-Trip Inspections](#)**

Thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspections are mandatory before and after every trip segment. All vehicle discrepancies and damage shall be documented on the District's [Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Inspection Checklist](#). (The checklist may be found by following the previous link.) The school's school-based bus coordinator shall

collect and maintain a file of completed checklists and submit them when the bus is brought to the garage for monthly inspection. As the checklist is an official record, falsification or completion of the checklist without having conducted the inspection is prohibited.

Any operator who discovers vehicle discrepancies that rise to the level of safety-of-operation concerns shall immediately contact the garage and arrange for the vehicle to be safely transported to the garage for repair. The vehicle operator who discovers the safety-of-operation concern shall be responsible for completing a [Vehicle Discrepancy Report](#) (available at [www.escambiayellow.com](http://www.escambiayellow.com)) as soon as possible. Vehicles on which safety-of-operation concerns have been identified shall not be operated until the discrepancy has been repaired or cleared by the garage.

**Note:** School bus operators shall immediately notify the school's school-based bus coordinator of any bus found unsafe for operation.

The school's school-based bus coordinator is responsible for collecting inspection checklists from bus operators after each trip and ensuring they are submitted when the bus is turned in for inspection by the garage.

### **2.2.2 – Exercising Buses**

All school-based buses shall be exercised with a trip around the campus at least two days every week. These exercise trips shall be annotated on the [Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Inspection Checklist](#).

**Note:** The exercise trips are crucial to ensuring buses that do not get regular use do not atrophy in a parking space. They are necessary to help prevent roadside breakdowns, regardless of the age of the bus.

### **2.2.3 – Misuse/Abuse of District Vehicles**

Misuse or abuse of any District vehicle will likely result in disciplinary action, including the loss of the employee's District driving privileges. The following conditions are considered to be a misuse of District school buses:

- Driving without the authorization of the principal, assistant principal, or the school's school bus coordinator.
- Driving without a valid Florida Driver's License and District training and permitting.
- Permitting a person not defined as an approved District school bus operator a District school bus.
- Non-compliance with traffic/motor vehicle laws and regulations.
- Engaging in unsafe practices, including failure to use and ensure that all passengers use all available safety equipment in the vehicle being operated (safety equipment includes seat belts and/or shoulder harnesses).
- Falsification of travel authorizations, defensive driver training program certificates, accident reports, inspection reports, or other forms relative to the use of the vehicle.
- Improper storage or parking of a District vehicle.
- Personal use of District vehicles or transporting passengers other than persons directly involved with official District business.
- Failure to comply with any law, regulation, or policy regarding the use of District vehicle.
- Failure to maintain the material condition and cleanliness of District vehicle.
- Failure to conduct required operator inspections.
- Failure to comply with inspection schedules.
- Failure of the driver to check the oil and water each time a vehicle is fueled.
- Smoking in a District vehicle

### **2.2.4 – Preventative Maintenance Inspections**

Every school bus shall be inspected at the garage every 30 business days according to a schedule established by the Garage Manager. When school-based buses are presented for monthly inspection, they shall be clean and include inspection and discrepancy documentation. Likewise, they shall be returned to school representatives clean and ready for service.

When delivered to the bus garage, school-based operators shall drive the bus to the main entrance of the garage and deliver the keys and Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Inspection Checklists as well as any Vehicle Discrepancy Reports to the garage service counter.

School-based bus operators receiving a loaner bus in return shall be provided a clean bus full of fuel which shall be clean and full of fuel upon return.

### **2.2.5 – Maintenance and Repair**

The Transportation garage will perform safety maintenance and repair of District vehicles under the direction of the Transportation Garage Manager.

Buses will be serviced at appropriate intervals in conjunction with monthly inspection visits.

Repair of District vehicles shall be completed at the Transportation garage unless otherwise directed by the Transportation Garage Manager. Drivers shall complete the Vehicle Discrepancy Report (available at [www.escambiayellow.com](http://www.escambiayellow.com)) when submitting vehicles for repair work.

### **2.2.6 – Food and Drink on the Bus**

Neither food nor drink are permitted on board the bus unless the bus operator has provided prior approval.

### **2.2.7 – Vehicle Security**

School buses shall be properly parked and secured with the keys removed from the bus when left unattended.

Note: School bus keys shall not be left inside the bus at any time for any reason.

### **2.2.8 – Lost Keys**

Lost keys shall be reported to the Transportation garage immediately.

### **2.2.9 – Post-Trip Bus Cleaning**

The school bus shall be cleaned at the completion of every trip. The coach or teacher in charge of the trip is responsible for ensuring buses are thoroughly cleaned immediately upon trip completion.

## **2.3 – Pre-Trip Planning & Preparation**

### **2.3.1 – Rosters and Itineraries**

All trip planning shall include a roster and a detailed itinerary submitted to the bus coordinator prior to the week of the trip.

The roster shall include each passenger's name, student number, grade, date of birth, parent/guardian contact number, and address.

Note: The roster is required in the event there is an accident or a need to contact a parent or guardian in the event of an emergency or delay.

The itinerary shall include the starting point location, destination, en route stops, timeline, the name(s) of staff members and volunteers who will travel on board the bus, and any other amplifying information relevant to the trip.

**Florida Administrative Code 6A-3.0121 – Responsibility of School District and**

### **Parents or Guardians for Students Who Are Transported at Public Expense**

(1) The school district shall determine what safety measures shall be used in the transportation of students. Such safety measures shall include the designation of routes, bus turning areas, and student stop locations which shall not be left to the discretion of the bus operator.

#### **2.3.2 – Student Trip Guide**

Staff members responsible for the conduct of trips shall consult and comply with the Student Trip Guide posted on the Transportation website ([www.esambiyellow.com](http://www.esambiyellow.com)) early in the planning phase to ensure full compliance and that proper approvals are in place.

### **2.4 – Trip Safety**

#### **2.4.1 – Staffing the Bus**

When the bus operator is the teacher in charge of the trip or a member of the regular coaching staff and the trip involves the transportation of more than twenty (20) students and/or the transportation of students after 7:00 PM, there shall be an additional staff member or District-approved volunteer assigned to the bus and in position on the bus to assist the bus operator and actively supervise the students. Staff and volunteers shall not sleep or be otherwise preoccupied in a manner that takes their attention away from their responsibilities.

All trips other than normal trips between school and home involving the transportation of students where the bus operator is not the teacher in charge of the trip or a member of the regular coaching staff shall have a staff member on board the bus. In cases where there are more buses than staff members and utilization of District-approved volunteers is necessary instead, staff members shall be spread among

buses to the greatest extent possible and remaining buses crewed by volunteers.

Note: Staff members shall not ride to or from events in private vehicles separately from their students. They are accountable for their students and shall not abdicate their authority to volunteers.

All trips involving the transportation of students returning from more than 50 miles from school after 10:00 PM shall include a staff member or District-approved volunteer whose sole function is to assist the driver with navigation, traffic, and attention to driving.

The staff member in charge of students being transported shall either be on board the school bus transporting his or her students or on board a bus in the convoy transporting his or her students to ensure adequate and direct supervision and accountability.

With prior approval of the principal, a non-school staff member may proceed directly from his/her work location to the event site in a private vehicle provided there is no practical way for him/her to accompany his/her students on the bus. However, the students shall be otherwise supervised as directed in this Handbook.

#### **2.4.2 – Duties of Staff and Volunteers**

School staff and volunteers shall ensure the bus operator has the roster and trip itinerary in hand. Rosters shall precisely reflect the students actually on board the bus for each leg of the trip.

Prior to departure at each end of the trip and at any en route stops, school staff and volunteers shall ensure all students listed on the roster are on board the bus.

School staff and volunteers shall ensure all rules and requirements pertaining to the trip and student transportation are met.

School staff and volunteers shall ensure the bus is immediately thoroughly cleaned upon trip completion.

School staff and volunteers shall recognize that the bus operator functions in the role of bus operator under the authority of the Director of Transportation who, along with the Superintendent, are required by the State of Florida to ensure the safe, efficient, and dependable transportation of students and the appropriate care of school buses.

School staff and volunteers shall position themselves so they are in a position to adequately observe and supervise the students in all parts of the bus. They shall not permit horseplay.

Staff and volunteers shall ensure students are not permitted to depart the event location via any means other than the bus on which they arrived unless they have prior approval granted by the school principal, without exception. That prior approval shall be granted in writing on a Parent Travel Release Request Form and only under exceptional circumstances where the student's travel with the team poses an otherwise unavoidable and untenable inconvenience for the family.

Note: Only the student's parent or guardian may provide the alternate transportation. Students may not travel with another student's parents at any time.

Staff and volunteers shall ensure students return to school on the same bus on which they traveled to the event.

Staff and volunteers shall ensure only assigned personnel ride on board the school bus.

Neither spectators nor coaches' family members are permitted to ride the bus. Only badged employees or volunteers may be on the bus.

### **2.4.3 – Bus Operating Range**

School-based buses shall not be used for trips east of Crestview, Niceville, and Ft. Walton Beach unless specifically approved by the Transportation Garage Manager.

District school buses shall not be operated east of Tallahassee except under the following conditions:

- the school shall request a bus for such a trip at least one (1) week in advance so a bus can be reserved and prepared for the trip; and
- the coach must complete the weekly travel log and forward the information to the Transportation Department or submit the information on the [Activity Bus Usage Form](#) found by following the link this must be completed on Monday at Noon, the week of travel. This is to ensure that we have proper after hours coverage for mechanical issues.
- bus operators shall not drive more than 8 hours in a duty day with duty days separated by at least eight (8) consecutive hours off duty; and
- the bus operator shall request diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) and be trained in its use prior to the trip;
- pre-trip/post-trip inspection checklist shall be submitted to the garage upon return; and
- the bus shall be returned to the garage cleaned and fueled by noon the following workday; and
- an additional staff member or District-approved volunteer shall staff the bus to assist with supervision of the students and to assist the driver with navigation, traffic, and attention to driving; and

Only buses specifically authorized and insured for trips to Alabama shall be taken to that state and then no more than 100 miles across the Escambia County (Florida) line. Trips to other states in District school buses are not authorized. Without exception, the school bus shall not be operated beyond Lake City, FL (300 miles from Pensacola)

#### **2.4.4 – Suitable Surfaces for School Buses**

District school buses shall be operated on paved (or gravel) all-weather surfaces only; they may be parked on unpaved surfaces only when the surface is a stable all-weather surface where the bus will not become stuck or otherwise immobilized.

#### **2.4.5 – School Bus Capacity**

The District requires a seat occupancy of not more than three elementary school students and two middle and high school students per seat.

In no event should there be four students to a seat nor should there be students sitting or standing in the aisle of the bus.

Equipment carried on board the bus shall be safely stowed so it will not become a missile in the event of a crash or rollover.

#### **Florida Statutes, Sec. 1006.22 – Safety and Health of Students Being Transported**

(12)(a) The routing and scheduling of school buses must be planned to eliminate the necessity for students to stand while a school bus is in motion. When circumstances of an emergency nature, as defined by written district school board policy, temporarily require transporting students on school buses in excess of the rated seating capacity,

the buses must proceed at a reduced rate of speed to maximize safety of the students, taking into account existing traffic conditions. Each district school board is responsible for prompt relief of the emergency condition by providing additional equipment, bus rerouting, bus rescheduling, or other appropriate remedial action, and must maintain written district school board policies to address such situations.

#### **School Board Rules 6.05 – Student Passenger Loads**

A school bus shall not be considered overloaded if all passengers on the bus are safely seated.

#### **2.4.6 – Unusual Incidents**

Unusual incidents involving school buses, particularly when there are students on board, shall be reported immediately to the Transportation Department and to the Deputy Superintendent. The bus operator is responsible for contacting the Transportation Department in the event of any unusual incident that occurs on a trip involving the condition of the school bus or the transportation of staff or students.

#### **2.4.7 – Roadside Breakdowns**

All roadside breakdowns shall be reported immediately to the [Transportation Department Garage](#). Buses shall not be towed or otherwise moved other than under their own power until or unless that action has been approved by the Transportation Department Garage Manager or his or her designee. Likewise, disabled buses shall not be abandoned without prior approval of the Transportation Department. The bus operator is responsible for obtaining approval by contacting the Transportation Department before the vehicle is abandoned.

#### **2.4.8 – School Bus Operating Parameters and Limits**

School buses shall not be operated beyond their acceptable operating parameters and limits. If the school bus gauges, lights, and/or audible alarms indicate an abnormal function, the bus shall be pulled to the side of the road at the nearest safe location until the garage can advise the school bus operator of the appropriate action to take. There is no transportation to games, events, or activities that are exempt from this requirement as the school bus is only safe for student transportation when it is operating as it was designed. It is a violation of the law to transport students on board school buses that are not ready and safe for service. The school bus operator is accountable for the operation of the bus and should not think he or she can abdicate that accountability to someone else. Only an official at the Escambia County School District Transportation Department can provide clearance to operate the school bus under these conditions or authorization to perform maintenance or repair action on school buses.

#### **2.4.9 – School Bus Accidents**

Accidents of any severity, wherever and whenever they occur, shall be reported immediately to the [Transportation Department](#) before moving the bus anywhere but out of the roadway. All vehicle accidents shall be investigated in accordance with Transportation Department SOP 10-02-n4 immediately. The bus operator is responsible for immediately contacting the Transportation Department in the event of a school bus accident of any severity.

All students and other passengers shall remain on board the bus unless an overriding safety concern precludes it. In that case, students shall remain in the immediate vicinity under the control of the school bus operator. Students

and other passengers shall not be released for further transportation to the destination until they have been released by the investigating law enforcement officer and the District Transportation Department.

School bus operators shall not leave the scene of an accident until they have been released by the investigating law enforcement officer and the District Transportation Department.

Note: Thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspections and the documentation of those inspections, required by policy and by law, will help ensure accident damage, however slight, is noted and reported in a timely fashion.

#### **2.4.10 – Contacting the Transportation Department**

There is a placard located in the school bus with emergency Transportation Department contact numbers. In the event you are unable to reach anyone listed on the placard, contact your principal or assistant principal and ask them to contact the Director of Transportation and the Deputy Superintendent immediately. The placard is located on the bulkhead above of the driver's seat.

#### **2.4.11 – Traffic Laws and Rules**

Bus operators shall not exceed the posted speed limit or the maximum safe speed allowed by existing road and weather conditions, and never above 55 mph.

They shall also ensure they remain attentive to the fact that the school bus is not a normal vehicle. It must be driven with particular attention to stop signs, traffic signals, and the whims and carelessness of other motorists.

### 2.4.12 – Cellular Telephone Use

United States Department of Transportation research has revealed that drivers are almost four (4) times more likely to be involved in a safety-critical event when their eyes are off the forward roadway for more than two (2) seconds and that drivers spend 77% of their time with their eyes off the forward roadway when they're texting. The research has also found that texting drivers are 23.2 times more likely to be involved in a safety-critical event if they are texting and driving.

"Texting" is defined as actions involving multiple button pushes (or user inputs), whether a text message is involved or not. Operators of Board vehicles are not permitted to "text" unless the vehicle is safely pulled off of the roadway and is out of gear with the brake applied.

Operating a vehicle while on the phone beyond these very specific parameters – or while otherwise distracted – endangers you, your passengers, pedestrians, and other motorists.

a. Employees should anticipate that unauthorized use of cellular phones while operating a Board vehicle will result in disciplinary action which may include termination of employment. Cellular phones are permitted onboard school buses for emergency use only and only when the bus is pulled off of the roadway, is out of gear, the brake is set, and the driver is out of the driver's seat. Thus, **the use of a cellular phone or other personal electronic device for any reason while operating a school bus is strictly prohibited**, even through the use of so-called hands-free devices and when stopped at a stop light, stop sign, or bus stop. Operating a school bus while on the phone – or while otherwise distracted – endangers you, your passengers, pedestrians, other motorists.

Length of service with the District will not be considered in mitigation as we expect that length of service should inspire good conduct and professionalism, not excuse gross misconduct and unprofessionalism.

As compelling as the outlook for strong disciplinary action is, employees should be primarily inspired to comply with this policy because of the grave danger to themselves, passengers, pedestrians, and other motorists that violations of the policy would present. Anyone not moved by the prospect of losing one's job for a violation should contemplate the lifetime of grief and misery one would endure if he or she was responsible for someone's death or injury because they didn't have the self-discipline to do the right thing. The District has a duty to be diligent in acting decisively on this issue. The District hopes and expects that employees will take heed immediately and perform accordingly so neither discipline nor tragedy will ever arise as a consequence of ignoring the warning. This is the warning.

### 2.4.13 – Emergency Contact

[Transportation Department emergency contact numbers](#) are listed on placards on buses. Schools should notify the Transportation Department when they need replacement placards.

## 2.5 – Student Management & Leadership

### 2.5.1 – Rosters and Itineraries in Hand

Before departing on a trip, the bus operator shall have the roster of students on board the bus and the trip itinerary in hand. The bus roster shall have the following information on the roster: 1. student's name, 2. student number, 3. student's grade, 4. parent name, 5. phone number. This information is required by the federal government and if stopped you will

be required to produce the information for law enforcement.

### **2.5.2 – Student Conduct**

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. This idea is borne out in Florida Statutes with language that directs school principals to “fully support the authority of his or her teachers and school bus drivers.”

It is essential, therefore, that students, staff, and volunteers recognize the need for consistency between student accountability in the classroom and their accountability on board the bus.

That linkage is the key ingredient in ensuring the excitement associated with going on a trip or playing a big game does not overwhelm the need for good conduct and accountability.

#### **Florida Statutes, Sec. 1006.09 – Duties of School Principal Relating to Student Discipline and School Safety**

(1)(a) Subject to law and to the rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board, the principal in charge of the school or the principal's designee shall develop policies for delegating to any teacher or other member of the instructional staff or to any bus driver transporting students of the school responsibility for the control and direction of students. Each school principal shall fully support the authority of his or her teachers and school bus drivers to remove disobedient, disrespectful, violent, abusive, uncontrollable, or disruptive students from the classroom and the school bus and, when appropriate and available, place such students in an alternative educational setting.

#### **School Board Rules 6.01 – Student Conduct and Discipline.**

(2) The conduct of any student while on a school bus shall be controlled by the bus driver and the principal of the school that the student is authorized to attend. Disciplining of such student shall be the responsibility of the principal of the school that the student is authorized to attend and may include withdrawal of special transportation accommodations authorized under Board Rules or permission to use the school bus service.

#### **Florida Statutes, Sec. 1006.09 – Duties of School Principal Relating to Student Discipline and School Safety**

(1)(b) The principal or the principal's designee may suspend any student transported to or from school at public expense from the privilege of riding on a school bus for violation of district school board transportation policies, which shall include a policy regarding behavior at school bus stops, and the principal or the principal's designee shall give notice in writing to the student's parent and to the district school superintendent within 24 hours.

#### **Florida Statutes, Sec. 1006.10 – Authority of School Bus Drivers and District School Boards Relating to Student Discipline and Student Safety on School Buses**

(1) The school bus driver shall require order and good behavior by all students being transported on school buses.

(2) The district school board shall require a system of progressive discipline of transported students for actions which are prohibited by the code of student conduct. Disciplinary actions, including suspension of

students from riding on district school board owned or contracted school buses, shall be subject to district school board policies and procedures and may be imposed by the principal or the principal's designee. The principal or the principal's designee may delegate any disciplinary authority to school bus drivers except for suspension of students from riding the bus.

(3) The school bus driver shall control students during the time students are on the school bus, but shall not have such authority when students are waiting at the school bus stop or when students are en route to or from the school bus stop except when the bus is present at the bus stop.

(4) If an emergency should develop due to the conduct of students on the bus, the school bus driver may take such steps as are immediately necessary to protect the students on the bus.

(5) School bus drivers shall not be required to operate a bus under conditions in which one or more students pose a clear and present danger to the safety of the driver or other students, or the safety of the bus while in operation. The district school board shall have measures in place designed to protect the school bus driver from threats or physical injury from students.

### 2.5.3 – Student Responsibilities

In addition to the student rights and responsibilities described in the manual by that name, students shall ensure they maintain the highest standards of conduct and decorum while on board school buses and while participating in trips.

Students should be at the assembly point and fully ready to board the bus no later than 15

minutes prior to the designated departure time in order to ensure proper accounting and instructions regarding their transportation.

Once on board, students shall fasten their seat belts and keep them fastened for the duration of the trip.

Students shall not bring food or drink on board the bus unless the bus operator has provided prior approval.

Students shall not litter or make a mess on the bus. They shall clean up after themselves.

Students shall dress appropriately and neatly for the trip.

Students shall stow and secure all equipment and personal items to prevent them from becoming missiles in the event of a crash or rollover.

Students shall conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Foul language, obscene or offensive actions or conduct, and gambling in any form is not permitted.

Students shall not wear spikes or cleats on board the bus.

Music and videos shall be listened to through headphones or earpieces, not the device's external speakers.

The emergency door shall be used only in the event of an emergency unless otherwise authorized by the bus operator in advance.

Students shall enter and exit the bus through the boarding door at the front of the bus only.

Students shall return to school via the same bus on which they traveled to the event. Without exception, students shall not be permitted to depart the event location via any means other

than the bus on which they arrived unless they have prior approval granted by the school principal. The form required for a student to leave the activity with a parent or guardian must be filled out prior to the trip. The required form is, Parent Travel Waiver Request Form. This form must be completed in advance, prior to the trip departure.