TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Kinnelon School District

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER HANDBOOK

Kinnelon Board of Education
David Mango, Superintendent
Kaitlyn Lawler, Business Administrator
Vincent Shivas, Director of Special Projects and Transportation

2026 - 2027

REVISED 8/10/2026
BY Vincent Shivas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD……..3
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND YOU…….....4
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE…….....5 - 7
STANDARDS FOR DRIVERS
DRUGS/ALCOHOL, SMOKING……..…8
PROFANITY, CONFIDENTIALITY, DRESS CODE……9
ATTENDANCE
COPY OF ROUTE/BULLETIN BOARDS…….……...10
LICENCES/CERTIFICATES
REPORTING TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS
EMERGENCY CALLS, USE OF CELL PHONES.....11
STUDENTS BOARDING BUS
IDLING SCHOOL VEHICLES
BUS STOPS……...…12
TIMELINESS ON ROUTE
BUS OVERLOADING
LOST ARTICLES……..13
PERSONAL USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES
INSPECT BUS AT THE END OF ROUTE
CANCELLATION OF WEEKEND ATHLETIC TRIP
SWAPPING ATHLETIC TRIP……..14
REFUSING TRIP
ARRIVAL OF TRIP
COACHES……...……..15
DRIVER SAFETY TALK
END OF ATHLETIC TRIP/HOUSEKEEPING
TEAMS AND DIRT
PERSONAL ITEMS…….……..16
THE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION/STARTING OUT
POST TRIP INSPECTION.....17
FUELING, FUEL LEVEL, REMINDERS
CARE OF TIRES
CLEANLINESS OF BUS.....18
FIRST AIDE KIT, FIRE EXT., TRIANGLES, WINDOWS.....19
BUS SPEED
AM/FM RADIOS
TWO-WAY RADIOS……..20
RAILROAD CROSSINGS.....21
BUS PARKING
LOCKING THE BUS
BUS KEYS
BRAKES…….…….…..22
STEERING
SIGNALS.....23
MIRROR
BACKING
CONVOY.....24
ACCIDENTS..... 25
ACCIDENT REPORTS
FIRE ON THE BUS.....26
STUDENTS.....27
BASIC SAFETY RULES……...….28
PROCEDURES FOR GOOD PUPIL MANAGEMENT
STUDENT CONDUCT.....29
THREATENED. STUDENT 30
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DRIVER..... 31
CONCLUSION…….32
HANDBOOK RECEIPT……...……33

FOREWORD

This Driver Handbook is written to promote the highest degree of professionalism, safety and efficiency in the school transportation services offered to the Kinnelon School District students. It is designed to be an aid to you, the driver, and it gives much of the information needed to meet District requirements.

Driving a school bus is not an easy task or one to be taken lightly. School bus drivers bear a degree of responsibility imposed upon no other class of professional drivers. School bus driving, among other things, requires constant attention, a full measure of driving skill, diplomacy in handling students, parents, school personnel and the public, a complete knowledge of all applicable rules and regulations, an understanding of defensive driving, basic first aid, CPR, and last, but not least, a deep feeling of personal responsibility for the students aboard your bus. Once a school bus leaves the District transportation facility, the success or failure of that trip rests mainly with you.

Please read this handbook carefully and be sure to ask questions if any point is not clear. Questions and suggestions are always welcome! **You will be held responsible for a complete understanding and knowledge of the contents of this book.**

Defensive Driving is skillful driving.

You should be as good as,

or better than,

<u>any</u> driver you meet.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND YOU

The school bus driver is sometimes the only “regular” contact a parent has with the Kinnelon Public School District. Often, the only means we have of establishing an effective relationship with the community is through YOU, the bus driver. Your positive attitude and friendly reaction to the people of this community will make a big contribution to the District's ability to create a positive image. Your driving habits, abilities, appearance and overall attitude are being constantly evaluated by the people you meet. Your school bus is similar to a giant billboard advertising the District!

Misunderstandings with the public can be avoided if you cheerfully explain the reason for your actions, that you are following instructions. If the person in whom you are speaking with still has questions, you should refer them to the Transportation Department office for further information. Always do so with a friendly smile.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR BUS DRIVERS

PICKING UP YOUR BUS

- Complete a NJMVC Drivers Vehicle Inspection Report (Pre-trip) before leaving the bus lot
- If your bus has damage or needs repairs, mark appropriately on your Inspection Report and fill out Vehicle Repair Request if necessary. Use another bus until repairs are made.
- Perform a physical brake check before leaving the bus lot
- Be sure all mirrors are adjusted and angled properly
- Be sure the bus is clean and orderly
- Report anything out of the ordinary to your Transportation Supervisor or if you have any questions regarding your pre-trip

PICKING UP AND DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

- Activate your yellow/amber school lights approximately 300ft before your stop if possible
- Stop completely and then proceed to open the door… your red lights and stop sign should activate
- Ask you riders to please take a seat and put their seatbelts on and wait a minute for them to do so. Close the door and pull away slowly
- When dropping off students be sure they have cleared the bus completely then check all mirrors before closing the door and pulling away
- Student's may not enter the bus without the driver or other school board approved staff present (this excludes when a special needs student is being assisted)
- All Pre-K and Kindergarten students must be received by a parent/guardian at the bus stop. If parent/guardian is not there, the driver must radio the Supervisor to return student to the school and Supervisor will call the school for the parent to be notified.
- The drivers must follow the Individual Education Plan (IEP) regarding transportation of any special needs student on their route.

STUDENTS IN TRANSIT

- Teach basic safety rules, repeat as needed
    a. Students should be asked to take a seat and put seatbelt on
    b. Students shall not change seats as bus is in transit
    c. Students shall keep their hands to themselves
    d. No eating or drinking on the bus
    e. Students shall talk quietly
    f. Students should adhere to the code of conduct from their school
- Avoid the use of cell phones in any way while driving the bus. Pull over in a safe location to make an emergency call if needed
- Keep radios low or off to avoid any unnecessary distractions

SCHOOL DROP OFF

- When students are dropped off at the school, walk the bus to be sure all students have left and that there are no belongings left on the bus
- If something is found on the bus, please hand over to an administrator and let them know your route number.

RETURNING YOUR BUS TO PARKING LOT

- Shut bus down, activate emergency brake and switch lights off
- Walk the bus to be sure there are no sleeping children
- Be sure windows are shut, check for vandalism and items that may have been left
- Pick up garbage and sweep
- Lock the back emergency door and the entrance door
- Take a look at the outside of the bus and check for leaks

INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT

- Call 911 immediately to let them know of the accident
- Call or radio the Transportation Supervisor (she will call the school)
- If no answer from Transportation office, call the school directly
- KHS – (973) 838-5500 EXTS: 4000, 4001, 4003, 4004, 4009
- PRM – (973) 838-5230 – EXTS: 3000, 3001, 3002, 3003
- STONYBROOK – (973) 838-1881 EXTS: 2000, 2001, 2002
- KIEL/SISCO SCHOOLS – (973) 838-0611 EXTS: 1000, 1001, 1002
- AVOID USING STUDENT NAMES OVER THE RADIO

- SECURE THE BUS
    a. Determine whether to move the vehicle out of harm's way
    b. Shut off engine and engage brake
    c. Activate flashers

- CHECK FOR INJURIES
    a. Know extent of injuries before radio communication if possible
    b. Assist with first aid if necessary
    c. Don't move the injured

- SECURE THE AREA
    a. Assess the condition of the outside of the bus…there could be downed wires, fuel spill or dangerous traffic conditions – EVACUATE ONLY IF NECESSARY – Don't hesitate to evacuate but make the decision on what you know.
- b. Stay calm and reassure students
    c. If evacuating, stay on the bus while students evacuate
    d. Account for each student
    e. Never allow "Good Samaritans" to transport students

WHEN TO EVACUATE STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL BUS

- When there is a fire or potential of a fire
- When stopped in the path of a train or adjacent to a railroad track
- When there is a possibility of the bus shifting
- When your location fails to provide oncoming traffic with a least 300 feet visibility of the bus
- When the danger of staying on the bus is greater than the risk of leaving the bus

INJURED CHILD ON THE BUS (INCIDENT) NOT CAUSED BY A BUS ACCIDENT

- Call 911 immediately (**if necessary**)
- Call Transportation Supervisor (she will call the school)
- If no answer from Transportation office, call the school directly
- KHS – (973) 838-5500 EXTS: 4000, 4001, 4003, 4004, 4009
- PRM – (973) 838-5230 – EXTS: 3000, 3001, 3002, 3003
- STONYBROOK – (973) 838-1881 EXTS: 2000, 2001, 2002
- KIEL/SISCO SCHOOLS – (973) 838-0611 EXTS: 1000, 1001, 1002
- AVOID USING STUDENT NAMES OVER THE RADIO

- SECURE THE BUS
    a. Determine whether to move the vehicle out of harm's way
    b. Shut off engine and engage brake
    c. Activate flashers

- CHECK FOR INJURIES
    a. Know extent of injuries before radio communication if possible
    b. Assist with first aid if necessary
    c. Don't move the injured if situation is serious

REUNIFICATION NEEDED FOR SCHOOL OR THE DISTRICT

- Drivers are not on campus throughout the day and will be called and asked to come in and assist with the transport of the students and staff in crisis.

PARKING

- If for any reason a driver must leave the bus, the bus must be parked with the break on and completely locked.
- Never should keys be left in the ignition or on the bus.

Student Transportation Errors and Missed Bus Stops

I. Student Misses Their Assigned Bus Stop

If a student remains on the bus after the bus has passed the student's assigned stop:

1. **Driver Notification**
   The driver shall immediately notify Dispatch and report that the student has missed their assigned stop.
2. **Dispatch Notification**
   Dispatch shall notify the appropriate school of the situation and provide the student's name, bus/route number, and any other pertinent information.
3. **Parent/Guardian Notification**
   The school shall notify the student's parent/guardian and advise them of the situation and the anticipated resolution.
4. **Continuation of Route**
   The driver shall continue the scheduled route whenever practical in order to avoid unnecessarily delaying the remaining students on the bus.
5. **Return to Student's Stop**
   Upon completion of the scheduled run, the driver shall return the student to their assigned stop unless otherwise directed by Dispatch or the school.
6. **Supervision of Student**
   The student shall remain under the driver's supervision until the student is safely delivered to the appropriate stop or an alternative arrangement has been authorized by the school or Transportation Department.

II. Driver Misses a Scheduled Bus Stop

If a driver inadvertently passes a student's assigned bus stop:

1. **Driver Notification**
   The driver shall notify Dispatch as soon as it is safe to do so and report the missed stop.
2. **School Notification**
   Dispatch shall notify the appropriate school and provide the student's name, bus/route number, and relevant details.
3. **Parent/Guardian Notification**
   The school shall notify the student's parent/guardian and explain the situation and anticipated resolution.
4. **Continuation of Route**
   The driver shall continue the scheduled route whenever practical so that other students are not unnecessarily delayed.
5. **Return to Missed Stop**
   Upon completion of the scheduled run, the driver shall return to the missed stop and transport the student home.

6. **Alternative Direction**
   If circumstances require an alternative response, the driver shall follow instructions provided by Dispatch or the Transportation Department.

III. Student Is Discovered to Be on the Wrong Bus

If a student is discovered to be riding a bus other than their assigned bus:

1. **Driver Notification**
   The driver shall notify Dispatch as soon as it is safe to do so and provide the student's name and current bus/route information.
2. **Dispatch Notification**
   Dispatch shall notify the appropriate school and provide all available information regarding the student's location and circumstances.
3. **Parent/Guardian Notification**
   The school shall notify the student's parent/guardian and advise them of the situation.
4. **Await Further Direction**
   The driver shall await instructions from Dispatch or the Transportation Department regarding the appropriate disposition of the student.
5. **Return to School, When Directed**
   When directed by Dispatch or the Transportation Department, the driver shall return the student to the appropriate school.
6. **Student Transfer at School**
   Upon returning to school, the student shall be released only to an authorized school staff member who will assume responsibility for the student and coordinate the next steps.
7. **Police Department**
   Students shall **not be transported to the Kinnelon Police Department** as a routine response to a student being on the wrong bus. Any involvement of law enforcement shall be coordinated by the school administration or Transportation Department when circumstances warrant.

IV. General Requirements

- **Student safety is the first priority** in all transportation-related incidents.
- Drivers shall not use a cellular telephone or other device while the bus is in motion except through an approved hands-free communication system and in accordance with district policy and applicable law.
- Drivers shall communicate with Dispatch as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Dispatch and school personnel shall maintain communication with the parent/guardian throughout the incident as appropriate.
- Drivers shall not independently make alternate transportation arrangements for a student without authorization from Dispatch or the Transportation Department.
- All incidents shall be documented and reported in accordance with district transportation procedures.

- Under no circumstances should a student be left unattended or released to an unauthorized individual.

STANDARDS FOR DRIVERS

DRUGS/ALCOHOL

Improper behavior such as the use of alcohol or any prohibited substance either before reporting for, or while on duty, is strictly prohibited. Also prohibited are any medications, oral or otherwise, that may affect the central nervous system, including but not limited to amphetamines, barbiturates, or narcotics. If you are ill and require medication, be certain the medicine does not reduce alertness, cause drowsiness, or produce unsafe side effects. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if it is safe to drive a school bus while taking any questionable medication. Please report any medications you may be taking to the transportation supervisor.

DRUG TESTING

The District participates in a federally mandated random drug-testing program. During the year drivers will be randomly selected and required to submit to drug testing, and/or alcohol testing. Failure to submit to the testing may result in a positive test result. All new driver candidates are required to take and pass a drug test as a condition of employment. Federal law also requires that drug testing be conducted immediately after certain types of accidents.

SMOKING

The use of tobacco or any form of smoking (vape) is **prohibited** anywhere/anytime on district property and/or in district vehicles by New Jersey State Law N.J.S.2C:33-13.

PROFANITY/VULGARITY

Use of profane or vulgar language is strictly forbidden while in the presence of students, on school property in the vicinity of children and adults, or while otherwise representing the District. This behavior indicates ignorance on the part of the user and demonstrates a "poverty of vocabulary." Use of such language in the presence of fellow employees may be the basis of grounds for a formal complaint of harassment in the workplace. Please express yourself properly at all times as you are representing the school district.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As a school bus driver you may acquire knowledge of a sensitive nature regarding teachers and other district staff and students. You may overhear something at or about a school. Such knowledge is to be kept strictly confidential. Gossip regarding students, teachers, other drivers, or schools can cause discord and bring discredit to the District. If you find it necessary to discuss student, driver, or school problems of a sensitive nature, it should be with your supervisor.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE/DRESS CODE

School bus drivers are continually in the public view and proper dress is very important. A driver who looks neat and professional at all times projects a better image than the overly casual. The way we are viewed affects the whole team. Shorts for **ALL** drivers must be no more than 2 inches from the knee and **NO** tank tops, halters or men's sleeveless shirts are allowed. T-shirts with inappropriate messages such as endorsements for alcohol, tobacco and other products are not permitted. **Please be sure to wear district shirts** whenever possible unless you don't have a clean one to wear for the day. District shirts were ordered to be a part of the dress code so that we can be identified easier by district personnel and public. All clothing worn should be clean and well kept. For safety, shoes, sneakers and boots may be worn. They should have a closed front and back with a non-slip sole. Hair should be neat and trim and not allowed to fall in front of your face, or impair vision in any way.

LATE/ABSENCE

You are required to notify your supervisor that you will be late or that you will be out by 5:00 A.M. A "no call/no show" is defined as failure to notify supervisor that you will be late or absent. If this happens the office could fail to cover your assigned route in time. This causes hardship for the students, and could create an unsafe condition while the students wait for the bus. A "no call/no show" is a serious offense. Disciplinary action will be taken.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is an expectation of the district. You are expected to report to work daily, and an absence must be for good cause. Since you must be replaced when you are absent, you are **expected to schedule personal activities during off duty-time.** Annual medical checkups, **vacations,** etc., should be scheduled during spring, winter or summer breaks and off-hours. Do not place an unnecessary burden on the Department by asking for personal time off. There is, however, an understanding that emergencies will arise. Time taken for medical check-ups and obtaining licenses at DMV, SHOULD BE SCHEDULED AROUND ASSIGNED HOURS. You are to make every effort to schedule them during non-duty hours.

COPY OF ROUTE

A copy of your route will be kept in the Supervisor's office and the driver's room. Any changes should be given to the supervisor so that the route can be approved for change. Any special arrangements made with teacher/parent or any other changes should be discussed with your supervisor so that anyone taking this route will be prepared on how it is done.

BULLETIN/WHITE BOARDS

There are bulletin boards and a white board located in the drivers' room. **You are expected to check the boards and your mailbox as often as possible each day**. Important information can be added at any time.

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES

As a condition of employment as a school bus driver, you must maintain and carry in your possession, when driving, all appropriate licenses and certificates prescribed by law and/or the District, including a:

- Valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL): A valid license of the appropriate class (Class B).
- Medical Certificate

School bus drivers are required to obtain licenses and certificates prior to employment. Y**ou are** responsible to keep your license, fingerprints and medical certificate up to date. There is a list posted for your convenience in the drivers room of expiration dates for each driver.

REPORTING TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

Immediately report all personal traffic violations, whether in your personal vehicle or a Kinnelon public school bus, to the Supervisor.

EMERGENCY CALLS

A Transportation phone list is provided to each driver. If for any reason you cannot contact your supervisor or Board Office, all the numbers you could possibly need are listed for you. **Always try to reach your supervisor first.**

USE OF CELL PHONES ON SCHOOL BUSES

Cell phones may NOT be used while driving a school bus. This includes any wireless devices such as Bluetooth. A cell phone may only be used when the bus is parked in a safe area, off of the road or highway, or in an emergency situation.

STUDENTS BOARDING SCHOOL BUSES

Students are not allowed to board a school bus unless a bus driver or school board employee has boarded the school bus first. Exceptions will be allowed in the event a bus driver was helping a special needs student to board or exit the bus or in the case of some other emergency.

IDLING SCHOOL VEHICLES

Department of Environmental Protection regulations at N.J.A.C. 7:27-14.3 prohibits diesel-powered vehicles from idling for more than **three consecutive minutes** if the vehicle is not in motion. This does not apply to discharging or picking up passengers or being stopped in a line of traffic. Idling produces a wide variety of air pollutants, unnecessarily consume fuel and increase long-term engine maintenance costs.

BUS STOPS

Every attempt will be made to establish bus stops in the safest locations. All stops should be made a safe distance from any obstruction that could interfere with safe loading or unloading procedures. Watch for trees or poles that might be close to the curb line and make sure that there is no hole or other defect that might make the stop unsafe.

Routes have specific assigned "stops" which are sent out before the school year begins to every student's guardian so that they know where their child will be picked up or dropped off. **You may not change or add a stop location** without prior approval. If a guardian of a student has a request and/or complaint regarding the "stop", have them contact the Board Office. Notify your supervisor of any concerns you may have so that the changes can be made through the right channels. If you are uncertain about exactly where to stop, check with your Supervisor.

TIMELINESS ON THE ROUTE

Our entire operation is based on the premise that you will adhere to a set time schedule. **SAFETY**, however, takes precedence over punctuality in all cases. Never attempt to "make up" time by taking short-cuts in your pre-trip inspection or by speeding/driving recklessly.

Never leave a bus stop early. If you find yourself running more than ten minutes behind schedule, for any reason, use the bus radio to call the supervisor or board office to notify them of your estimated arrival time to the school.

BUS OVERLOADING

Never drive a school bus with more passengers than the rated capacity of the bus. If you find you have too many students, you should first notify your supervisor on the 2-way radio or cell phone, who will ask you to stay at the bus stop to protect the students until another bus arrives.

If your load is increasing and you foresee a possible future overload developing, let your supervisor know. Try to find the reason for the extra students so corrective action may be taken.

LOST ARTICLES

After each run you should check your bus and pick up articles left behind. Let the transportation office know what items have been found and on what route so in case of a call from the parent or school, we will have information as to its location. Items not claimed by the next day should be taken to the school's main office.

Lost articles should not be left in the Drivers Room or in the storage compartments in buses.

PERSONAL USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES

DO NO USE YOUR VEHICLE FOR PERSONAL USE WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR.

DRIVER IS REQUIRED TO INSPECT BUS FOR PUPILS AT END OF ROUTE

A school bus driver shall visually inspect the school bus/van to which he/she is assigned at the end of the transportation route to determine that no pupil has been left on the bus. The child check button in the back of the bus will be pressed to deactivate the alarm. If you have parked your bus in the yard and find a pupil on the bus and you have not left your bus, please call the Supervisor so we can determine who the pupil is, call the parent and drive them to their stop immediately.

If you lock up and leave a pupil on the bus, you will be terminated from your position.

CANCELLATION OF WEEKEND ATHLETIC TRIPS

If a driver arrives at the board office at the appropriate “half hour before pick up time” (not before) or at the pickup location for a weekend trip and is notified the trip has been cancelled, the driver will be paid for two “straight time” hours. If the driver is not told the trip has been cancelled and there is no one waiting at the pick-up location the driver is to call the supervisor **FIRST**. The supervisor will then direct you to what you need to do next. If the supervisor cannot get in contact with the athletic director the driver may be asked to wait at the pickup location for a while longer to be certain the group has not had a mix-up in departure times. If the team is a no show the driver will also be paid for two “straight time” hours.

“SWAPPING” ATHLETIC TRIPS

Athletic trips shall not be "swapped" without permission by supervisor.

REFUSING AN ATHLETIC TRIP

Once you accept an athletic you are expected to honor the commitment to take the trip. Refusing a trip, especially on the weekends after acceptance, causes hardship not only on the office staff, but also on your fellow drivers who must make last minute arrangements to cover for you. Refusing a trip after acceptance, must be for good cause and *approved by the Supervisor.*

If more than one driver is assigned an athletic trip and the group discovers they do not need one of the buses, the last driver assigned will return to base.

ARRIVAL AT ATHLETIC TRIPS

YOU ARE TO ARRIVE AT AN ATHLETIC TRIP PICK UP AND RETURN LOCATIONS **TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED DEPARTURE TIME EXCEPT FOR THE 2:30PM HS ATHLETICS WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION**.

If this is not possible you should notify supervisor when the trip is assigned. Certain groups may require an even earlier arrival to load equipment. When dropping a group off at their destination, let the coach or sponsor know what you are planning to do, and what to expect, and if you plan to leave, how they can contact you in an emergency. If you are not scheduled to return the group, try to verify that the trip is covered, and ideally, remind the other driver, giving such information as time verification, directions, etc.

COACHES/TEACHERS

No group is to be transported without at least one supervising adult on board. **There are a few rare exceptions that may have special approval**. When in doubt, check with supervisor. The driver is responsible for the safety of the trip, and a coach/teacher can be an excellent resource to help make the trip enjoyable. Take a minute to review mutual expectations before departing.

DRIVER SAFETY TALK FOR FIELD TRIP/ATHLETIC

After loading the bus, introduce yourself to the passengers and as required, take a moment to review emergency evacuation procedures. You are required to point out the locations of the fire extinguisher, first aid kit, and all exit locations even though some groups may have heard the talk many times in the past. Explain that school bus rules apply to all, even on trips.

END OF THE FIELD TRIP HOUSEKEEPING

Before checking out, the bus must be **swept**, **garbage emptied**, window and hatches closed, seatbelts off the floor, both doors locked and paperwork and keys placed in the proper locations. Please let Svetlana know if the bus needs fuel. If a problem with the bus arises, please fill out a vehicle repair request form.

TEAMS AND DIRT ON THE BUS

Some teams (football, baseball and soccer, for example) may not be able to keep from tracking some mud onto the bus. If tracking dirt onto your bus troubles you, you should probably not accept these trips. ***Dirt and mud must be removed before securing the bus at the end of the trip.***

PERSONAL ITEMS

Do not leave personal items such as a wallet in places on the bus where anyone may have access. Some buses have small storage compartments and some do not, but all have very limited space. *It is best to keep your wallet or important personal things with you or in your pocket.*

THE PRE TRIP INSPECTION AND STARTING OUT

By law, you are responsible for checking your vehicle to determine that it is in satisfactory operating condition prior to leaving the premises. You are paid to report to work in the morning fifteen (15) minutes prior to departure time to perform this required pre-trip inspection. Be sure to **sign** your name on the designated line **at the time of the inspection**, declaring you have completed a pre-trip inspection and brake check. Be sure to include your beginning and ending mileage. If you have not, the incomplete form could be used against you in the event of an accident. A separate pre-trip inspection form SHALL BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY for each bus driven during a day, listing any vehicle defects. This **form *shall be submitted at the end of each workday***.

Stay with your bus during the warm up period. Each bus engine shall be warmed up for a brief period prior to a.m. and p.m. runs. Five minutes should be enough idling time for diesel buses to build up the air supply and warm up a cold engine. Do not idle a diesel above 1200 rpm. Excess idling time means excess fuel consumption and unnecessary air pollution. A word of caution about diesel engines: They become more efficient as they gradually reach operating temperatures. **Run the engine easily** on the road for the first few minutes, below maximum rpms. A cold engine has nothing to do with the outside temperature; it is simply one that has not been running for a couple of hours. **DO NOT RACE A COLD ENGINE!**

THE POST TRIP INSPECTION

Before leaving the bus, make certain you walk through to the back of the bus to check for vandalism, lost and found items, debris, **and sleeping students**.

The other part of the post trip inspection is performed while you walk around and away from the bus. Make it a habit to look back and check the bus for **lights left on**, obvious leaks or anything else that needs correction. Catch it now and avoid a delay later.

FUEL TANK LEVEL AND FUELING

Diesel and gasoline fuel tanks should be filled when they are at or just below the half mark. Kevin or Dave will fuel the buses at Quick Chek and the van drivers fuel at the DPW. Fuel spills are detrimental to the environment and should be avoided. Do not leave the fuel nozzle unattended during the fueling process. Fuel spills are to be cleaned up immediately. Notify the DPW office or Quick Chek if this happens. For the van drivers…please do not leave the key at the pump at the DPW and record the number on the pump to keep track of fuel.

CARE OF TIRES

You are expected to check tires in the morning as part of the pre-trip inspection procedure and to check them at least once more during the day to catch slow leaks or a flat. Lug and axle nuts will also be checked.

Nothing destroys a tire faster than rubbing or scraping its sidewall against the curb at bus stops and on corners. Fast, hard cornering also scrubs rubber off tires. **Proper, careful driving can add many miles to tire wear.**

CLEANLINESS OF BUS

Every bus SHALL be kept clean and free of litter. Each workday the driver is responsible for sweeping the floor and emptying the garbage along with other bus procedures (windows secured, doors locked etc.).

BOTH PARTS OF SEATBELT MUST BE PULLED OUT AND ON TOP OF SEAT…NO SEATBELTS ON THE FLOOR…PLEASE CHECK AFTER EACH RUN!

- Use your layover time wisely. Sweep frequently, at least daily. Dust such items as dashboard, visor, switch panel, interior ledges, driver seat, driver area, etc. Cleaning all mirrors and glass is important for safety.
- Dashboard, mirrors, visor and driver area are to be kept free of all articles. Brooms should be secure and should not block exits.

FIRST AID KIT

Each school bus is equipped with an approved first aid kit. Be sure you are familiar with the use of its contents. Please let Supervisor know if bandages, or other items need to be replaced.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

The fire extinguisher, like most bus equipment, is required by law. The care and knowledge of operation of this device is your responsibility. Check the gauge daily for correct internal pressure, be sure the pin is in place with the seal and a valid, dated inspection tag that is good for one year from inspection date.

EMERGENCY REFLECTORS/TRIANGLES

Each school bus shall at all times be equipped with three red emergency reflectors. All reflectors shall be maintained in good working condition. Be aware of the proper use and placement under various conditions. The law requires that when your bus is in the roadway and disabled, you always place reflectors by the bus, even during daylight hours.

BUS WINDOWS

Maintain window level so they are never opened more than half way, or three notches, to protect students from projectiles entering from outside the bus, and to prevent them from placing their arms or head outside the bus. (Kindergarten through Fifth grade).

BUS SPEED

Most speed limit signs tell you the *highest* speed at which you can expect to drive safely. You should never drive faster than is safe. This means that regardless of what a highway sign may say, you must think of all conditions that may affect you're driving. These include the frequency of bus stops, the number and speed of other vehicles on the road, the surface of the road (smooth or rough, wet or dry, wide or narrow), how far ahead you can see, pedestrians, bicyclists, and animals on the roadway.

ALL speed limits shall be strictly adhered to and in no event shall a school bus exceed **60 miles** per hour with or without students on board. Be advised that parents and Police call the Board of Education office when our buses are perceived to be speeding. **NEVER SPEED TO MAKE UP LOST TIME!**

AM/FM RADIOS (IF EQUIPPED)

You should keep in mind that using radios can be hazardous. When driving the bus you may take your eyes off the roadway or take one hand off the steering wheel to reach the controls. THIS IS DANGEROUS. Some drivers turned the radio volume so high that an emergency vehicle's sirens or an urgent call over the 2-way radio or cell phone could not be heard. This projects a very poor, unprofessional image for Kinnelon – and YOU, and is not permitted. Station selection requires good judgment. *It is advised that the radio be turned off for elementary students*. Some drivers use radios as tools to help maintain discipline. Poor behavior -- no radio. Again, this could become a hazard by causing student arguments and distracting you from your driving. Generally, the louder the radio, the louder the student will converse. Common sense is the rule.

TWO-WAY RADIOS

All District buses are equipped for two-way communication. Our radios are never to be used for personal messages -- **PUPIL TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS ONLY.** Try to monitor the radio before transmitting so you don't "walk" on another's conversation.

DRIVERS SHOULD COMMUNICATE WITH SUPERVISOR ONLY.
Driver to Driver transmissions are allowed for transportation related information. Please use the radio for emergency only.

- Pause after keying the microphone, since there is a three second delay in transmission in both directions.
- Know what you are going to say before keying your microphone. **Be brief**.
- Hold the microphone about six inches from your mouth, use your natural voice and speak clearly. **Do not shout into the microphone**.
- Do not give detail and/or assumptions of what may be wrong with your bus **especially during student transportation** (example: "the brakes on the bus don't feel right") If the malfunction does not require getting students off the bus, radio that you are pulling over and call the Supervisor by phone.
- Use the radio for emergency transmissions only. Most other transmissions to supervisor can be made by cell phone during a break in the route or in person when you return to office. **Always be professional on the radio!**

RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Whether carrying passengers or not, the driver of any school bus must, before crossing a grade of railroad tracks, bring their bus to a full and complete stop no less than 15 feet or more than 50 feet from the rails nearest the front of the bus.

When drivers are making stops for railroad crossings, they shall carefully observe traffic and reduce speed, far enough in advance of stop, and activate their four-way flashers to warn other vehicles that they are preparing to stop. When approaching a railroad grade on multiple lane roadways, drivers are to pull to the far right lane.

Bring your vehicle to a complete stop. Once stopped, the driver shall listen and look in both directions along the track for approaching engines, trains or cars.

For improved vision and hearing, a window to the driver's left is to be opened and all noisy equipment is to be shut off until the bus has cleared the crossing.

If the view of the track or tracks for a distance of 1,000 feet in either direction is not clear or is obstructed in any way, no portion of the bus may be moved onto the tracks, until the driver has made certain that no train is approaching.

BUS PARKING

District buses must be parked in their designated parking spots. Buses are not to be parked at private homes, on public streets, or at any other location between runs, unless authorized in advance by the Supervisor.

LOCKING THE BUS

When the bus is not in use, the bus front entrance, rear door and hatches must be locked. If you use the same bus during the day and it is not raining, you may leave the hatches opened for air but must be locked up at the end of the day. On trips, secure your bus any time you leave it unattended.

BUS KEYS

Bus **keys are to be returned to the key box when you are finished with the morning routes**. When you return for the rest of your day, you may pick up your keys in the key box and then **return them again at the end of the day**. There should be a spare set in Svetlana's desk at all times.

BRAKES

Brakes are the most vital working part of any vehicle. Know the use of the bus brake and emergency stopping system. Keep in mind that **the brakes wear every time you use them**. Practice defensive driving by avoiding fast starts and **sudden stops**. Stopping a school bus smoothly and within the limits is a sign of good driving. A good driver keeps the vehicle under control at all times and knows the stopping distances. Sudden stops can cause passenger injuries!

STEERING

Knowing the correct way to steer a vehicle will mean many accident-free miles. Avoid jerky movements, and know your turning points, proper position of hands on wheel and the correct position in the roadway when preparing for a left or right turn or a stop.

USE OF SIGNAL DEVICES

Give an adequate signal whenever changing lanes, pulling over to stop, or pulling back into the flow of traffic after making a stop.

Always be courteous and patient. DO NOT rely on the left-hand turn signal to create an opening in the traffic flow so you can pull out from the curb. One cause of school bus accidents is the violation of right-of-way caused by bus drivers who force their way back into traffic.

Signal you're right or left turn 100 feet before reaching the turning point. At highway speeds it is best to signal at least five seconds before you intend to change lanes. Change lanes slowly. Weather and road conditions may make your signals hard to see. Keep lights clean, and use your mirrors. **Look before you turn!**

Cancel turn signals while sitting at a bus stop, or when loading/unloading. The flashing light tends to confuse people who may be unsure about what to do when approaching a stopped bus.

Never assume another vehicle is turning when the directional light is on. Drivers have been known to forget to cancel the directional light after completing their turn. Sometimes they change their minds at the last minute and do not turn at all!

MIRROR USE

Before leaving the bus yard, all mirrors must be adjusted for maximum visibility on both sides and across the front of the bus. Ask another driver for assistance in order to adjust the mirrors properly.

BACKING

Every attempt should be made to avoid backing a District bus. It is advisable to drive around the block to avoid any backing. Many unnecessary accidents can be avoided if buses do not back up at all. In some school districts drivers are required to obtain permission from dispatch before backing a bus. If you MUST back up, sound your horn -- even if your bus has backup lights and beepers -- to warn people in the area. If possible, designate a responsible student in the rear seat to keep watch and aid you. (The guide does not relieve you of any responsibility for an accident). Always pick up passengers before making a backing movement, or make the backing movement before unloading passengers so students are away from the area in which you are backing. You are not to back a District bus on school grounds unless there is a responsible ADULT present at the rear of the bus to direct you. While backing is necessary to park in the bus yard, remember it is a very hazardous maneuver and you must always be extremely cautious. Use all mirrors when backing.

BUSES IN CONVOY

When two or more buses are traveling together to the same destination, they are to travel in convoy (or caravan). The lead bus shall maintain a legal speed that will enable the following drivers to keep each other in sight. The lead driver maintains sight of the second bus at all times. The second bus in line is responsible for keeping the third bus in sight at all times and so on for as many buses as are in the convoy/ caravan. Buses in convoy are never to pull out to pass another bus in the same convoy.

There is a tendency for vehicles in a convoy to follow too closely. Remember the five second rule.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING IS A REQUIREMENT

When driving a school bus, hold a safe following distance (five-second rule minimum). Always travel in the right-hand lane, except when absolutely necessary to do otherwise. Approach all traffic signals with a plan for stopping.

ACCIDENTS

The law states that all "school bus accidents" must be reported to the Police. If the transportation office is closed, and you cannot reach anyone on your phone, you must inform the Police of the accident yourself by dialing 911. Please be sure to call your Supervisor on their cell phone immediately. **Do not leave the scene of the accident regardless of how minor it may seem. Wait until instructed to do so by the police or your Supervisor.** When you make the call, speak slowly: give your vehicle number, route number or destination if you're on an athletic, location and number of students onboard. Let the office/police know if anyone is injured.

- Do not move your bus, unless it is in a dangerous position. In that case, move the bus to the side of the road in a safe location.
- Put on the 4 way flashers.
- Do not leave students on the bus alone. If the vehicle is in danger of being hit again or if it is in danger of fire, evacuate the students as quickly as possible, using either or both of the doors, whichever is the safest. Be sure to instruct the students to move at least 100 feet away from the vehicle and stay together in a safe location. Count the students as they leave the bus and again when assembled outside the bus to be sure no one is missing.
- Before leaving the bus, do a walk-through to be sure no student has been left behind.
- Do not discuss the accident with onlookers
- If you are on the way to school, be sure to have the nurse check the students upon your arrival.
- When you return to the transportation office you must immediately fill out a report, regardless of how minor the incident, **even if there were no students onboard**.

Accidents and traffic citations **not** involving a school bus, such as in your personal vehicle, are also to be reported immediately to the Supervisor.

WRITTEN REPORT OF ANY COLLISION, INJURY OR INCIDENT

All accidents and incidents must be reported to your Supervisor. You must report minor accidents or scratches as well as major collisions or injuries of a serious nature. A full and complete accident or injury report must be filled out by the bus driver and turned in to the Supervisor. A complete report, with all required information, is to be made as soon as conditions permit, **but no later than the next working day after the accident.** Be sure to note carefully any obstructions or special circumstances that you feel contributed to the accident or injury. Diagram any and all lane markings, traffic signal devices, stop signs and other pertinent information. **Make a list of all passengers on the seating chart**. Try to be as detailed as possible in your description, as your report may be used as a reference at a later date.

THE REPORT YOU FILE WITH THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT ALONG WITH THE POLICE REPORT MAY AFFECT YOUR DRIVING RECORD AND/OR YOUR DRIVING PRIVILEGES.

FIRE ON THE BUS

If a bus catches fire, the safety of the students is your **first** consideration. ***Only*** after all students are safely off the bus at least 100 feet away, should you worry about the vehicle. After all other tasks are safely completed, apply the extinguisher as needed. Aim under the fire, rather than hitting it from above. *If in doubt, let it burn*. Under no circumstances should you let a student get near a burning bus, regardless of possessions that may be in the fire. No piece of equipment is worth injury to either you or your passengers. **PUPILS ARE TO BE HELD IN A SAFE AREA AND UNDER YOUR CONTROL AT ALL TIMES.**

STUDENTS

You must **earn** respect and confidence to establish a good relationship with the students on your bus. This will help you to maintain control of a large number of students, which is perhaps the most difficult part of successfully driving a school bus. If you do not have the students' respect, and if you do not act like a mature and responsible adult, you make your job very difficult.

Each driver, because of differences in personality, must establish their own methods of control. What works for one driver may not work for another. Each student is an individual, the same as you, and should be treated as such. Never try to discipline a whole group for the infraction of a few. Keep in mind that most of the time you are the only adult aboard the bus. **You must exercise self-control above all.** A driver needs two kinds of sense -- common sense and sense of humor.

Children (and adults too) respond well when treated with fairness and consistency. It is our policy to have uniform rules and procedures that are enforced in a consistent manner. If we all work together as a team using the same procedures, the student will know the rules no matter which driver is in charge. If only ONE driver neglects their pupil management responsibilities, the system will break down. Children immediately pick up on the inconsistencies and changes and those differences often create student discipline problems.

The primary reason for good pupil management is safety. A driver who must constantly watch the inside mirror to try to catch a violator is spending too much time with their eyes off the road. If a situation develops which requires more correction than "a word to the wise" over the PA system, pull the bus over to the side of the road. This is better than trying to drive and discipline at the same time. Another alternative is to wait until you get to school or the next bus stop.

The following list is a guideline to use beginning the first day of school. Every day and every group should be handled the same so that eventually no matter which group you have - the rules are the same.

TEACH BASIC SAFETY RULES

1. "Please Sit down"

2. "Please Keep your hands to yourself"

3. "Please Talk quietly"

TEACHING THE THREE BASIC RULES WILL HELP AVOID 90% OF THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER.

Repeat and refer to the rules frequently. All students should know all three basic rules.

Teach students to load and be seated properly. This will require you to seat the students until they are able to do it themselves. If you know you will have a full bus, load back to front, so that the last students will not have to climb over the seated students. Plus, you will be certain all seats are taken. If you know (after a few days on the route) that you do NOT have a full bus, keep in mind that the rear of the bus is the most unsafe riding area and encourages horsing around. If possible, try to keep the rear seats unoccupied. If possible, kindergarten children should be transported in the front of the bus and should not be seated by an emergency exit.

Keep the first seat across the aisle from the driver seat available in case you need to move a student to the front of the bus or for a new unexpected student.

Require children to remain seated until it is their turn to get off the bus. If you are unloading all passengers at one stop, secure the bus, stand up, face the students and teach them to unload seat by seat from front to rear.

Teach them to REMAIN SEATED until the door is opened and you give them permission to stand.

Be firm and direct. Speak with authority, but *never shout or yell.* The calmer you are, the calmer your students will be. Above all, don't forget to say THANK YOU when your passengers do as you ask.

DO make maximum use of non-verbal language. Point, shake your head, use eye contact, etc...

DO give a conduct report once you have advised the child that you were going to give one.

PROCEDURES FOR GOOD PUPIL MANAGEMENT

All drivers are expected to establish and use the following recommended procedures:

- Only the bus driver is to operate the door, windows or any other part of the bus or its equipment, except in the case of an emergency when the driver is unable to perform normal tasks.
- Windows are not to be lower than third notch for K-5 students.
- Work at all times with students not to rush the bus when loading.
- Unload students from the front to the back of the bus on a rotational basis. This is excellent training for bus evacuation.
- Stop to load and unload students only at designated bus stops. Unauthorized stops are prohibited. Only students authorized to ride should be permitted on the bus.
- Students are to get off the bus only at their normal bus stop. Notes presented to driver for students to get off at a stop other than the designated stops are acceptable if signed by the parent AND school office. Remember that direction from principals and other administrators must be followed unless safety is compromised.
- Communicate the entire school year with students to establish and maintain good bus riding manners.

STUDENT CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of each driver to establish and enforce rules that will lead to a safe and comfortable ride for ALL passengers. It is suggested that during the first day or two of the school term you take time to familiarize each student with District bus rules.

THE TONE YOU SET THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF SCHOOL WILL BE THE ONE YOU WILL DRIVE WITH THE REST OF THE YEAR

Students will be quite willing to test you during the critical first few days of the new school year. This is perfectly natural and has happened ever since there have been children and adults. You must set reasonable limits at this time. Do not let the rambunctious one in the group exceed the limits you

have set, and you will soon find that the whole load has settled down. Never chastise a student in front of a busload of children.

If a SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT REPORT TO PARENTS form needs to be filled out, fill it out completely. If the student had previous referrals during the year, note the dates received. Be as specific as possible when describing the incident. For example, when a student uses abusive, profane or vulgar language, write it exactly as it was said. Although it may be embarrassing to you, it is important that the school officials and parents know exactly what was said.

IF A STUDENT IS THREATENED

Unfortunately, some students may pick fights with other students, especially when getting off the bus in the afternoon. Here are some things you can and should do:

- Prohibit taunting on the bus.

- If you suspect there may be a fight, call supervisor. If she can go out there, she will. If you think it may be a serious problem, let us know so we can call the school or police. Do not permit students that do not normally ride your bus to get on without authorization.

- If you see more than the usual number of students getting off the bus (to watch a fight), warn them that they will receive referrals. Get them back on the bus, if possible.

- Do not leave the scene until all students are clear and safe. The bus is a safe refuge for a threatened student.

- You can keep a threatened student on the bus and drop them off later. You can also deliver them to their door, if feasible. Check with supervisor first.

- If parents are home, the office can call them and ask them to meet the bus.

- The school district has disciplinary authority until the student arrives home. In other words, discipline can be enforced after they leave the bus.

- It is important that you make a reasonable effort to protect all your students from harm. Doing nothing when you see an altercation is the same as being an accessory to inflicting injury to the child.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DRIVERS

1. Parent and student complaints.

2. Dangerous and/or hazardous situations.

3. Traffic violations and/or accidents involving district transportation.

4. Late school dismissals or schedule conflicts.

5. Possible overloaded runs and/or any other information that may affect transportation.

6. Serious and/or recurring misconduct by students. By law, school bus drivers are accountable for the conduct of their riders, and when problems of student misbehavior occur, the following steps should be taken:

   a. At the first sign of a problem, talk with the student(s) involved. Use assertive discipline techniques. Change seating assignment(s). Let Supervisor know in writing to put in file. If there is no improvement, ask the principal/assistant principal for assistance.

   b. If the problem continues, use the SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT REPORT TO PARENTS. After completing the driver's part of the SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT REPORT TO PARENTS, give it to the Supervisor who will sign it, and have the copies sent out.

   c. When the school returns the signed goldenrod copy to the transportation office it will be filed to refer back to if there are further reports.

   d. Remember, you are a professional and you should always strive to use your best image when dealing with school administrators and parents.

CONCLUSION

You are entrusted with a great responsibility. Safe transportation of students to and from school is our primary purpose. The Kinnelon School District Transportation Department exerts every effort to provide safe, efficient and convenient transportation service to eligible students. To accomplish this, **all members** of our department must **work together as a team**.

We will continue to work with diligence to earn the respect and confidence of our administrators, teachers, parents, the public, and of course, the students. We are professionals who will see that this image is maintained and improved through our efforts. We CAN make a difference!

HANDBOOK RECEIPT

In signing this receipt, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Kinnelon School District's School Bus Driver Handbook along with attachments starting with Daily Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection. I further understand that I, as a professional school bus driver, am responsible for following all rules, regulations, laws and other directives pertaining to the safe and proper operation of school buses, including those listed in this handbook/attachments.

_____
SIGNATURE

_____ _____
PRINT NAME DATE