

**CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS**  
**Transportation & Programs for Exceptional Children**

## **Procedures for School Bus Loading/Unloading for Students Using Wheelchairs**

### **LOADING STUDENT USING WHEELCHAIR**

1. Bus driver sets parking brake and activates bus-warning lights. Stop arm and lights should remain out/on until the student is restrained on the bus.
2. Driver or transportation safety assistant locks the lift door in an open position.
3. Adult ensures student's seat belt is snugly fastened before placing the wheelchair on bus lift.
4. Adult positions the wheelchair on the bus lift with the student facing out.
  - a. Ensures that the wheelchair is placed on the lift back far enough for the footrests to be behind the raised lip on the front of the lift platform.
  - b. Disengages the gears on the motors of a power wheelchair to allow an adult to manually place the wheelchair on the lift if needed. Consult the school-assigned physical therapist for instruction in disengaging gears on power wheelchairs.
5. Adult secures the wheelchair on the lift in the following manner:
  - a. Manual wheelchair: Secure wheel locks.
  - b. Power wheelchair:
    - Turn off power at control box.
    - Secure wheel locks if available.
    - Re-engage the gears on the motors to set their internal locking mechanism if they were disengaged to place the power wheelchair on the lift. Consult the school-assigned physical therapist for instruction in re-engaging gears on the power wheelchair.
6. Adult standing on the ground beside the lift grips the wheelchair frame and maintains grip while lift is being raised. Adult inside the bus should grasp the push handle as soon as he/she can safely reach it.
7. Adult releases wheel locks on manual wheelchair and, if available, on power wheelchair. Adult disengages gears on motors of power wheelchair and manually pulls the power wheelchair into bus.
8. Adult safely guides the wheelchair into the bus making sure there is adequate clearance above the student's head at the lift door.
9. Adult places the wheelchair in a forward facing position for securement.

### **UNLOADING STUDENT USING WHEELCHAIR**

Follow steps 1-5 described above.

6. Adult in the bus grips a wheelchair push handle and maintains grip for as long as possible while the bus lift is lowered. Adult on the ground standing beside the lift grips the wheelchair frame and maintains grip while the lift is lowered.
7. Adult releases wheel locks and safely guides the wheelchair off the bus lift. Consult the school-assigned physical therapist before allowing student to drive power wheelchair off a lowered bus lift.

**Power wheelchairs should not be driven on/off the bus lift when it is in a raised position.**