

Bloomfield Schools Transportation Policy (Staff)

Department Procedures

1. Buses will be assigned to routes based on dependability, type of route, road conditions, the number of students, mileage and rotation of the fleet.
2. The drivers' lounge is provided for everyone's convenience. It is everyone's responsibility to help keep this area neat and clean.
3. The telephone in the lounge is a business phone. Personal calls will be limited to three minutes. Please make family, friends, and creditors aware this is a business phone, and not your personal phone for conducting personal business. The use of any office or shop phone for personal use is prohibited.
4. In-service training sessions will be set up during the course of the school year. You are required to attend a minimum of eight hours per semester totaling sixteen hours of instruction per school year. Any driver not completing required training will not be eligible for re-employment.
5. Buses are required to be parked in their assigned spaces until you are ready to leave the lot.
6. Activity trip tickets should be turned in after completion of trip. Trips taken on Saturday or Sunday will be turned in on Monday.
7. Medical appointments and personal business can usually be scheduled between your bus runs. Board Policy allows the supervisor to require a doctor's statement for extended use of sick leave or frequent intermittent use of sick leave.
8. The Transportation Manager or designee will obtain substitutes to ensure route coverage. Leave requests will be submitted five days in advance. The Transportation Manager or designee has the right to refuse leave if route coverage is not available.
9. When using a credit card, all receipts must be attached to the trip ticket and returned to the Transportation Bookkeeper.
10. Pre-trip inspections must be performed before transporting students. Any driver observed not making this inspection is subject to disciplinary action.
11. A situation that results in a student left on the bus due to improper or lack of post-trip inspection is subject to disciplinary action which may result in immediate termination.
12. Use of two-way radios is to be limited to official or emergency use only. Make sure the frequency is not in use before attempting to transmit. Use of names of students that could cause embarrassment to the student should not be used over the radios. FCC Regulations require English language only to be used.
13. School vehicles shall not be used for personal business.
14. Salary for transportation staff will be based on the district approved salary schedule.
15. No additional work time will be allowed unless pre-approved by the Transportation Manager.
16. Routes and hours worked are subject to change at any time due to student load capacity or rerouting for efficiency.
17. Any hours worked over 40 per week will be paid at time and a half. You will only be paid for time worked. Comp time will no longer be accrued.
18. Classroom and behind-the-wheel training will be submitted for pay when the trainee presents a CDL Learners permit. Remaining training time will be paid when the trainee presents a CDL with proper endorsements.
19. Bus drivers and assistants are expected to dress properly for the duties performed.
20. Bus drivers and assistants are required to wear proper shoes which will not slip off easily or impede driving. (sandals, flip-flops, slippers or high heels are prohibited.)
21. Any deficiencies found on the bus must be reported in writing on a work order request.
22. For your safety, drivers are not allowed to enter the restricted areas of the shop.

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23. Use of headphones or earbuds while driving is prohibited. Any drivers found doing so will be subject to disciplinary actions.
24. It is the driver's responsibility to maintain adequate fuel supply.
25. It is prohibited to use cell phones or portable electronic devices while driving, even when equipped with hands-free devices. (Not including the routing tablets)
26. Drivers will be allowed to have one child over the age of 18 months up to school age with them on their bus route upon approval from the Transportation Manager or designee.
27. The gate to the bus yard will be locked each evening. Drivers and staff entering or leaving the bus yard after work hours, or on weekends, are required to make sure the gate is secured at all times.
28. When a route becomes available, the award process will be followed.
29. Drivers assigned to an activity or field trip will be paid at the current activity rate established by the school district.
30. **ALL** employees of the Transportation Department are required to be fully licensed and qualified to drive a School Bus within 90 days of employment.

Section 1

School Bus Driver Qualifications and Training

1. Job Description

There are certain duties that all school bus drivers are required to perform. These include:

- A. Safe and efficient operation of a school bus, transporting students to and from school as well as related activities in accordance with all statutes and regulations.
- B. Must conduct thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspections of school buses and special equipment.
- C. Must have interest in and empathy for students.
- D. Must possess comprehensive knowledge of driving safety and courtesy.
- E. Must know and be able to comply with the federal, state and local school district rules, regulations, procedures, and laws as they relate to the operation of a passenger vehicle.
- F. Must have a valid New Mexico commercial driver's license with appropriate endorsements.
- G. Must have the ability to understand and carry out written and oral instructions.
- H. Must have the ability to maintain effective student behavior management control over groups of students.
- I. Must be able to meet or exceed the state required physical examination.
- J. Must be able to meet emergency situations in accordance with operating procedures.
- K. Must be willing and able to submit to and pass substance abuse testing as prescribed by local school board policy and FMCSA / DOT Regulations.
- L. Must maintain a satisfactory driving and criminal background that reflects a professional driver and which meets all district, state and federal requirements.
- M. Must be able to communicate clearly and effectively.
- N. Must have basic writing and math skills to accurately complete the assigned forms and reports.
- O. Must be able to drive all district route buses including full size buses and to operate lift equipment and securement devices on special needs equipment.
- P. Must be at least twenty-one years of age.
- Q. Must attend in-service training classes and safety meetings as required by the district, state or federal government.
- R. Must be able to read and interpret schedules and forms as well as read and use a map.
- S. Must be physically able to climb out of the school bus emergency door to evacuate the bus in an emergency.
- T. Must possess working knowledge of how to care for students with disabilities and special transportation needs.
- U. Must possess comprehensive knowledge of driving safety and courtesy.
- V. Must complete bus evacuation drills and the School Bus Safety Training course to meet district and state standards.
- W. Must be able and willing to complete and turn in all required documentation in a timely and accurate manner or as instructed.

2. Job Duties

- A. Conduct safe and efficient operation of the school bus in accordance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.
- B. Maintain good work habits through timeliness and low absenteeism for daily assignments and extra trips.

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- C. Properly report any and all mechanical concerns for the vehicle and its components.
 - D. Exercise student management through correct use of communication and discipline and report discipline problems through proper district procedures.
 - E. Control emergency situations in a proper manner and in accordance with established federal, state, and local operating procedures.
 - F. Maintain effective and professional communications with students, the employer, office staff, school staff and the public.
 - G. Maintain a cooperative attitude with fellow employees, supervisors, parents and school personnel, always promoting district goodwill.
 - H. Utilize maximum safety procedures for all passengers, while on the bus, and during loading and unloading activities.
 - I. Maintain a safe and clean working environment including buses, vehicles, bus yard, and facilities.
 - J. Maintain current route sheets including student list, bus stops, and times. Notify the supervisor immediately of any deviations.
 - K. Maintain current seating charts.
 - L. Attend parent, student, and driver conferences, as needed.
 - M. Attend Individualized Education Plan meetings (IEP's), when required.
 - N. Attend all required in-service training as well as any other required meetings.
 - O. Perform other duties as assigned by the Transportation Manager or designee.
3. **Working Conditions**
- A. Conditions include operating buses or vehicles in inclement weather, exposure to hot/cold temperatures, and exposure to possible injury due to traffic accidents. There is considerable exposure to dust, traffic fumes and high noise level from both outside traffic as well as from passengers. On occasion, psychological factors may include working with students with disabilities, dealing with life-threatening emergencies as well as coping with students. The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work. They are not intended to be construed as a complete list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required.
4. **Background Investigations (Revised 11/16/99)**
- A. Applicants recommended for employment with the Bloomfield School District (BSD) are subject to work history and reference investigations. Individuals recommended for employment will be subject to a criminal background investigation including mandatory fingerprinting at the candidate's expense, as a condition of further consideration for employment. Public School Code 22-10-3.5 requires fingerprinting.
 - B. All offers of employment are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of background investigations. Criminal convictions will not automatically bar an applicant from obtaining employment with Bloomfield School District, but pursuant to the Criminal Offender Act, NMSA 1978 " 28-24 and 28-2-5, may be the basis for refusing employment.
 - C. The administration may also conduct a background investigation of current employees if it becomes aware of facts, circumstances or conduct that give rise to a reasonable suspicion that undisclosed aspects of the employee's background might disqualify him or her to continue employment with Bloomfield School District.
 - D. Information from background investigations will not be disclosed to persons not directly involved in the certification or employment decision affecting the applicant or employee.

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5. Personal Background

- A. Any person initially applying for full or part-time employment with the BSD to operate a school bus or school owned activity vehicle used to transport students shall not be eligible to operate such a vehicle if they have:
 - i. Been convicted for driving a vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs (DWI or DUI) within ten (10) years of the date of application.
 - ii. Been convicted for DWI beyond ten (10) years from the date of application unless they provide written verification from a licensed counselor or physician that they have successfully completed an alcohol or drug abuse program.
 - iii. Been convicted two (2) times for DWI or DUI.
 - iv. Had their drivers' license suspended or revoked within the previous five years for serious traffic violations.
 - v. Been convicted of more than three (3) serious traffic offenses within three (3) years since the date of application.
 - vi. Been convicted of any felony within the previous ten (10) years since the date of application.
 - vii. A conviction for any violation of the Controlled Substance Act [30-31-1 to 30-31-25, 30-31-26 to 31-28, 30-31-30 to 30-31-40, NMSA 1978].
 - viii. Been convicted of child abuse pursuant to Section [30-6-1, NMSA 1978].
 - ix. Been convicted of any criminal offense in which a child was a victim as required by the offense.

6. Serious Traffic Offenses

- A. Serious traffic offenses mean a conviction of any of the following offenses contained in the Motor Vehicle Code [Articles 1 through 8 of Chapter 66 NMSA 1978]:
 - i. Speeding in excess of 15 miles per hour above posted speed limit.
 - ii. Reckless driving.
 - iii. Careless driving.
 - iv. Passing a school bus.
 - v. Following too close.
 - vi. Operating a commercial motor vehicle without holding a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) along with the proper endorsements.
 - vii. Racing on a highway.
 - viii. Homicide or great bodily harm by vehicle.
 - ix. Injury to a pregnant woman.
 - x. Failing to stop after an accident involving death or personal injury.
 - xi. Operating a vehicle after suspension or revocation of a driver's license.
- B. All drivers will be of good moral character and conduct themselves in such a manner as to exercise a positive influence over their passengers. The driver will be clean and neat in appearance and will not use vulgar signs or language.

7. Physical Qualifications

- A. A school bus driver shall be in good physical and mental health, be able-bodied and free from communicable diseases.
- B. A school bus driver must have and maintain a current and valid DOT Physical performed by a physician on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners per FMCSR (49 CFR Part 391).

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- C. A copy of the Medical Examiners Certificate must be on file at the school district Transportation Department before students are transported by the driver. The examination form must be retained for a minimum of one year after expiration.
 - D. Additional examinations may be required at another time as per the request of the District Transportation Manager, State Transportation Department, or the Physician.
 - E. The examination shall include, but is not limited to, all items shown on the physical examination form provided by the Department of Transportation (DOT).
 - F. Physical requirements shall include but not be limited to the following tasks:
 - i. Climbing - Getting on and off the bus to assist students with special needs.
 - ii. Walking - Walk to the vehicle in the parking lot, walk in aisles on board a bus, and walk around for inspections.
 - iii. Pushing - Closing door, pushing wheelchairs, opening emergency door.
 - iv. Reaching - Opening and closing door.
 - v. Pull - Parking brake, seats, doors, and other items.
 - vi. Gripping - Parking brake, seats, door and other items.
 - vii. Repetitive Motions - Turning the steering wheel, shifting the transmission.
 - viii. Sitting - Driving the vehicle, attending meetings.
 - ix. Talking - Announcing streets/stops, talking with passengers, talking on the radio.
 - x. Seeing - Keeping aware of general traffic conditions, stopped vehicles, traffic signals, viewing color of traffic lights, inspecting vehicles, monitoring passengers.
 - xi. Hearing - Listening to traffic sounds, for emergency vehicles, passenger inquiries monitor the radio, detect mechanical problems.
 - xii. Stooping/Stretching - Picking up and securing young or challenged passengers, securing wheelchairs, inspecting under the bus.
 - xiii. Lifting - Handling and assisting students with disabilities into their seats, wheel chairs, and securement devices.
 - G. The local school district and/or the State Transportation Department have the right to require re-examination or verification by a licensed physician in a specialized field as a condition of employment.
 - H. Controlled Substance and Tobacco Restrictions:
 - i. All school buses will be alcohol, drug and tobacco free areas.
 - ii. The driver or the bus assistant will not use alcoholic beverages or illegal substances prior to or during duty hours which would impair the driver's ability to drive the school bus or the bus assistants ability to perform required duties.
- 8. Instructional Programs for School Bus Drivers**
- A. Certification for first-time drivers will be completed as outlined in the *Standards for Providing Transportation for Eligible Students*. (6.41.4)
- 9. Individual Circumstances**
- A. A driver who had previous certification and employment experience as a school bus driver in New Mexico, but who has not been employed as a school bus driver for two or more years, shall take an 8-hour refresher course, to include at a minimum two hours behind the wheel, observation time and classroom instruction. The driver shall complete the required 16 hours of in-service during the first year of re-employment.

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10. **Substitute Drivers**

- A. A regular substitute is any person certified by the Transportation Department to operate a school bus on a regular to-and-from route. This person will be required to meet all qualifications and licensing requirements of the regular driver.

11. **License Requirement**

- A. A monthly license check is completed through the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority - SAMBA.
- B. Pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Code, an operator of a school bus will possess a Commercial Driver License (CDL), Class B or higher, with the appropriate P & S endorsements. School bus drivers are required to meet all current Motor Vehicle regulations.
- C. All bus drivers and vehicle activity drivers will be drug-tested for controlled substances as requirements of the Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing in accordance with FMCSR title 49 CFR Part 382.

Section 2

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Accidents and Emergencies

In case of any accident involving a school transportation vehicle, the following procedures shall be observed:

- A. STOP immediately.
- B. Protect the accident scene so that it does not become worse.
- C. Remain at the scene of the accident. **DO NOT** move the vehicle unless instructed by Law Enforcement Personnel.
- D. Render reasonable assistance to any person injured in the accident.
- E. Notify police and the appropriate local school administrator.
- F. If necessary to evacuate students, make certain that all students are in a safe location away from traffic and that they are not permitted to leave the scene of the accident on their own.
- G. Flags, flares, and/or reflectors should be placed appropriately to warn traffic.
- H. If a school vehicle is involved in an accident which results in serious injury or hospitalization of any student passenger, bus driver, pedestrian, or other vehicle occupant, the local administrator shall notify the NMPED Transportation Division office as soon as possible by telephone.
- I. If a school bus is involved in an accident in which a possible mechanical failure on the school bus is a contributing factor, the local school administrator will notify the NMPED Transportation Division office as soon as possible. The possible defective part(s) should be protected until directions are provided by the NMPED Transportation Division office.
- J. If a school bus is involved in an accident which results in the death of a student passenger, bus driver, pedestrian or other vehicle occupant, the NMPED Transportation Division office shall be notified immediately by telephone.
- K. Information such as names, license numbers, registration numbers, location, time, road and weather conditions, and a listing of all student passengers (including their seating location) should be obtained. Make no admission of liability or assume responsibility for the accident.
- L. Provisions for transporting students to their homes or to school should be made through the use of another school bus.
- M. In accidents involving a school transportation vehicle, the driver is required to fill out a school bus accident report form and send it to the NMPED Transportation Division of the State Department of Education within five days. All school bus accidents must be reported, regardless of how minor, including on-board accidents and accidents involving students approaching or leaving the school bus as observed by the driver.
- N. In addition to the school bus accident report and pursuant to State Statute 66-7-207, The driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in bodily injury to or death of any person or total property damage to an apparent extent of five hundred dollars (\$500) or more shall, within five days after the accident, forward a written report of the accident to the department of transportation.
- O. In accident cases involving serious injury or death, a complete investigation will be conducted by the NMPED Transportation Division, and the vehicle will be impounded until the investigation is complete. If a student passenger is killed within the school bus, the United States Department of Transportation may also conduct an investigation.

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2. Accident Adjudication & Disciplinary Actions

- A. Accidents involving a school bus, in compliance with the State of New Mexico will be adjudicated at the local district level. The BSD will have an accident review board to adjudicate the accident composed of the following: The Transportation Manager, Driver Trainer and two (2) of the driver's peers. The review board will determine the Preventable or Non-Preventable adjudication of each accident.
- B. If the accident is adjudicated to be a preventable accident it will be judged on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being the worst) and the following discipline measures will be implemented:
- C. The 1 to 5 grade will be determined by the review board. Information used to grade an accident will include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Driving environment.
 - ii. Cause.
 - iii. Law enforcement action.
 - iv. Driver negligence.
 - v. Other contributing factors.
- D. First preventable accident grading and disciplinary actions scale:
 - i. Verbal and written reprimand.
 - ii. One (1) day suspension without pay and written reprimand.
 - iii. Three (3) day suspension without pay and written reprimand.
 - iv. Five (5) day suspension without pay and written reprimand.
 - v. May result in the recommendation for immediate termination.
- E. Disciplinary actions on all grades may also include a requirement for attendance at all or part of the Driver Training Program to be decided by the Supervisor and/or driver review board.
- F. If a driver is involved in a second preventable accident within a two year period it may result in a recommendation for immediate termination.

3. Post-Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing

- A. It will be the employee's responsibility to report any accident to a supervisor who shall initiate the testing process. In the event that an employee fails to contact the appropriate parties within the required time period, It will result in disciplinary action up to termination. If the employee fails to report for drug and alcohol screening within the required time period, it will be considered a refusal to test and will result in termination unless injuries prevent such from happening according to DOT regulation. (FMCSR 49 cfr 382)

4. Plan of Action for Emergencies

- A. Each school bus driver will have a plan of action in case of an emergency. This plan should include both breakdowns and accidents and should incorporate procedures for evacuating the bus using the emergency door and other exits. Practice evacuation drills on school property will help to avoid panic in the event of an emergency. Evacuation drills must be completed at least once per semester.

5. Emergency Exit Drills

- A. Student emergency drills or adequate alternate instruction shall be conducted twice a year for school buses. Student emergency drills or adequate alternate instruction shall be conducted prior to departure on school-owned vehicle use for activity trips. Types of drills are:
 - i. Everyone exits through the rear emergency door.
 - ii. Everyone exits through the front service door.

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- iii. Students sitting in the front half of the bus exit through the front service door and students sitting in the back half of the bus exit through the rear emergency door.
- iv. If emergency doors are located mid-bus, students exit through the closest door.
- v. On buses with roof hatches, give instructions on their proper use.

6. Reasons for Actual Emergency Evacuation

- A. Fire or danger of fire - A bus or vehicle will be stopped and evacuated immediately if the engine or any other portion of the bus is on fire. Passengers should move a safe distance away from the bus and remain there until the driver of the bus or vehicle has determined that no danger remains. A bus or vehicle that is located near an existing fire and unable to move, or is near the presence of gasoline or other combustible material should be considered in "danger of fire," and students should be evacuated immediately.
- B. Unsafe position - If a bus or vehicle is stopped due to an accident, mechanical failure, road conditions, or human failure, the driver must determine immediately whether it is safer for passengers to remain in the bus/vehicle or to evacuate.
- C. The driver must evacuate if:
 - i. The bus stops in the path of any train or adjacent to any railroad tracks.
 - ii. The stopping position of the bus is subject to change and thus increases the danger to passengers. For example, if a bus/vehicle should come to rest near a body of water where it could still move and go into the water or over a cliff, it should be evacuated. The driver should be certain that the evacuation is carried out in a manner that affords maximum safety for the students.
 - iii. The stopping position of the bus/vehicle is such that there is danger of collision. In normal traffic conditions, the bus/vehicle should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more in all directions. A position just over a hill or around a curve, where such visibility is limited, should be considered a reason for evacuation.

7. Important Factors Pertaining to School Bus Evacuation Drills

- A. The safety of the students is of the utmost importance and must be considered first.
- B. All drills should be supervised by the local school principal or by persons authorized by the district administration to act in a supervisory capacity.
- C. The bus/vehicle driver is responsible for the safety of the students. However, in an emergency, the driver might be incapacitated so that he/she would not be able to direct the student emergency evacuation.
- D. Students should know how to:
 - i. Turn off the ignition switch, set the emergency brake and set triangular reflectors.
 - ii. Kick out windows, if needed.
 - iii. Open and close doors, account for all students passing his/her station.
 - iv. Help small students off the bus. Summon help when and where needed. Perform other necessary assignments.
- E. School bus drills should be held on school property and not on the bus route.
- F. The driver should stay in the bus during emergency evacuation drills. Be sure that the emergency brake is set, ignition is off, and the transmission is in neutral.
- G. Do not permit students to take lunch boxes, books, etc., with them when they leave the bus. Getting the student off the bus safely in the shortest time possible and in an orderly fashion is the objective of a school bus evacuation drill.

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- H. The students should move a distance of at least 100 feet away from the bus in an emergency drill and remain there in a group until given further instructions. The driver, aide, or sponsor will stay with the students.
 - I. All students should be given an opportunity to participate.
 - J. Each student should be instructed in the proper safety precautions while riding the bus in the drill procedure. This can be accomplished by assembly, classroom activities, or video presentations.
 - K. Students should be instructed in how and where to get help. Instructions and telephone numbers should be posted or carried in the school buses or vehicles.
8. **Procedures When Approached by Authorized Emergency Vehicles**
- The following procedure is developed to eliminate possible accidents involving school buses and emergency vehicles. In order to protect all parties concerned, it is necessary for everyone to exercise due caution. Children generally become very excited when emergency vehicles approach, and many will do things they normally would not do.
- A. When a school bus driver observes an emergency vehicle approaching, with emergency equipment in operation, the following action should be taken:
 - i. When the school bus is in motion, the driver should yield the right-of-way and immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right hand edge or curb of the roadway, clear of any intersection and will stop and remain in such position until the emergency vehicle has safely passed except when otherwise directed by a police officer.
 - ii. In the case of a school bus operating on a narrow road, the driver must make sure he does not pull off in an area that would constitute a hazard to his vehicle or passengers, such as an unstable shoulder.
 - iii. In the case of a volunteer fire department, if the bus is in a safe spot, it should remain there until the driver is reasonably sure that all volunteer vehicles have passed before pulling back into the roadway.
 - iv. If a school bus is stopped in the roadway, loading or unloading students, the following procedure should be used:
 - 1. If stopped in the roadway with school bus flashers in operation to unload students and they have not started to depart from the bus, the service door should be kept closed, the school bus flashers turned off and the emergency equipment waved by. If students are already out of the bus, keep the flashers in operation until they have safely crossed the roadway. The emergency vehicles should not pass the stopped bus until safe to do so.
 - 2. If the bus is stopped to load students and the flashers are in operation and students have started to cross the road or highway, leave the flashers on and get students loaded as quickly as possible. When the driver is sure that there are no students running toward the bus, turn off the flashers and wave at the emergency equipment. In instructions to students on safe loading and unloading, the driver should caution them about emergency vehicles and to stay on the edge of the roadway so they can pass safely.
 - 3. At no time should the driver leave the seat of the bus.

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9. Passenger Management

- A. It is the duty of the school bus driver to enforce all regulations governing the conduct of students from the time the students enter the bus in the morning until they depart from it at the school building, and from the time they enter the bus at the school building until they depart at their regular assigned stop.
 - i. A school bus driver should not knowingly permit a student off the bus at any point other than at their regular assigned stop without the permission of proper school authorities.
 - ii. The driver will not permit students to place heads, arms, or other parts of their bodies out of the bus; nor will any person be permitted to ride on the outside of the bus.
 - iii. The driver will report all serious discipline cases to the proper administrator in accordance with local school district policy. All state and local disciplinary regulations will be observed.
 - iv. Corporal punishment will not be administered by the driver, nor should the driver physically harm a student for disciplinary reasons unless for the protection of the driver or other students.
 - v. The driver will not permit any passengers to occupy any area in front of the passenger-seating area. Standees are not permitted.
 - vi. The driver will assign seats to students, and a copy of a current roster and seating chart will be on file in the Transportation Department as well as in the bus. This will be updated quarterly or as needed.
 - vii. Student safety:
 - 1. The driver and/or assistant will meet all needs identified in a student's IEP.
 - 2. No vehicle shall carry more than the rated seating capacity. All students will be seated when the bus is in motion.
 - 3. The driver will not carry on any unnecessary conversations with students while driving.
 - 4. The driver will not permit the transportation of firearms, knives, explosives, breakable glass, skateboards, or other dangerous objects.
 - 5. Only those animals authorized by an IEP will be allowed on the bus.
 - 6. The driver and/or assistant will be responsible for the safety and orderly conduct of the passengers on their assigned bus routes.

10. School Bus Inspections

- A. The semi-annual DOT, or any other state, or local inspections do not relieve the owner or operator of regular daily scheduled inspections and maintenance to ensure that each bus is in continual safe operating condition.

11. Pre-trip and Post-trip Inspections

- A. All school bus drivers and activity vehicle drivers must perform pre-trip and post-trip inspections before departure and upon return. All drivers are required to perform, at a minimum, the following duties:
 - i. Safe and efficient operation of the school bus in accordance with Federal, State, and Local Statutes and Regulations.
 - ii. A daily, thorough pre-trip operational check of the school bus and special equipment unless completed by other qualified personnel. A documented pre-trip inspection shall be conducted which shall cover at a minimum:

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Outside the vehicle:

1. Wheels, tires, lug bolts and nuts for serviceability.
2. All exterior lights for serviceability and operation.
3. All glass, mirrors, windshields. (clean, undamaged and properly adjusted)
4. Exhaust system for leaks, looseness, etc.
5. Open engine and battery compartment when conducting pre-trip inspection. Check oil and water, and check for any fluid leaks.
6. Service door, emergency exits, and buzzers.
7. Stop arm and signs.
8. Engine compartments for serviceability, battery, belts, wiring, proper oil and water levels.
9. Lift system for those vehicles equipped.
10. Fuel filler cap.

Inside the vehicle:

11. All gauges, seats, and interior lights.
 12. Horn and windshield wipers.
 13. Emergency equipment. (first aid kit, fire extinguisher, reflectors, and body fluid clean-up kit)
 14. Emergency exits and buzzers.
 15. Parking brake and service brake.
 16. Interior mirror.
 17. Cleanliness of vehicle.
 18. Heaters and defrosters.
- iii. The driver will not operate any bus/vehicle that does not meet the pre-trip inspection requirements. The district shall establish written procedures for immediate replacement of buses/vehicles which fail to meet pre-trip and post-trip inspection requirements.
 - iv. The driver will, as part of each post-trip inspection, ensure that no student remains on the bus/vehicle at the conclusion of the trip. If the driver leaves a student on the bus, the driver will face disciplinary action which may include immediate termination.

Section 3

SCHOOL BUS OPERATION REGULATIONS

1. School Bus Operations and Equipment

A. Route Requirements:

- i. On morning routes or mid-day pickups, a complete stop will be made at all established school bus stops whether students are present or not, unless a parent or guardian, school administrator or transportation provider has notified the driver that the student will be absent.
- ii. The driver will not wait for students unless they are observed making a hasty effort to reach the bus unless otherwise specified and justified in the student's IEP.
- iii. The bus will be brought to a complete stop with the park brake activated and the bus in neutral before boarding or offloading any students. The driver will use good judgment and not impede traffic unnecessarily.
- iv. The driver will close all doors before the bus is put in motion except when crossing railroad tracks.
- v. School buses will not be driven faster than the posted speed limit or faster than driving conditions allow. A driver receiving a traffic citation while driving a bus will be subject to disciplinary action. All moving violations, in any vehicle, must be reported to the Transportation Manager within thirty (30) days. DUI or DWI must be reported immediately. Disciplinary action will be taken if not reported.
- vi. The driver will not leave the driver's seat without stopping the engine, setting the park brake, putting the bus in neutral and removing the keys. If a bus is equipped with a diesel engine and/or automatic transmission, the driver will follow the manufacturer's recommendation for parking in gear.
- vii. The driver will keep the bus clean, well ventilated and properly heated when necessary.
- viii. The driver, if traveling in convoy, will stay on the same route as the lead vehicle and will maintain proper distance between vehicles.
- ix. The driver will not permit the use of the bus outside regular-to-and-from transportation or a school-sponsored activity without the approval of the Transportation Manager or designee.
- x. The driver will obey all traffic laws, ordinances and rules of the road.
- xi. The driver will not operate the bus in such a manner as to cause on-board accidents by jerking, stopping suddenly or swerving unnecessarily.
- xii. The driver shall report all hazards, whether potential or existing, on the route and all causes for failure to operate on schedule to the Transportation Manager or designee.
- xiii. Bloomfield School policy states that school buses do not turn right on a red light, even though a complete stop is made and the intersection is clear of cross traffic. This policy will be waived only with permission from authorized transportation personnel and under extreme circumstances.
- xiv. The school bus will not be filled with fuel while the motor is running or while students are on the bus.

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2. Bus Stops

- A. All school bus stops will be established by a coordinated effort among the Transportation Manager or designee and when appropriate, the IEP team. The local public safety organization having jurisdiction will also be included whenever necessary. Services will be designed to safely, efficiently, and economically transport a student in a manner which supports the student's educational program.
 - i. The local school district will review for safety each school bus stop on a school district approved cycle. The review cycle will not exceed five years.
 - ii. No school bus stop will be established where the view is obstructed to motorists for 500 feet in either direction. If because of natural conditions, a stop must be established with a view of less than 500 feet, the State Highway Department or other agency having jurisdiction will establish special highway signage and operational procedures.
 - iii. No school bus stop will be established on any interstate highway with controlled access. If necessary, stops will be established on service or frontage roads adjacent to the interstate.
 - iv. Any student kindergarten or younger must have a responsible person to receive them at their bus stop. If a responsible person is not present at the bus stop to receive the student, the student will be transported to the Transportation Dept. and the parent will be required to pick them up. If school personnel are not able to contact a parent, the student will be turned over to CYFD or Law enforcement. After three such incidents, the student will lose riding privileges.
 - v. Whenever possible, school bus stops will be established so that students do not have to cross the roadway.
 - vi. No school bus stop will be made at:
 - 1. A streetcar crossing, or railroad crossing used exclusively for industrial switching purposes, within a business district as defined in Section 66-7-1 NMSA 1978.
 - 2. A railroad grade crossing where a stop-and-go traffic light controls movement of traffic.
 - 3. An abandoned railroad grade crossing, which is marked with a sign indicating that the railroad is abandoned.
 - 4. An industrial or spur line railroad crossing marked with a sign read "EXEMPT CROSSING".
 - 5. Within 25 feet of any intersection.

3. Loading and Unloading at Schools

- A. When loading and unloading, it is recommended that buses be parked in single file, bumper-to-bumper as close as possible to avoid students from going between the buses.
- B. When loading, buses will be parked prior to dismissal time, if possible. School buses will be parked into position in the order that they arrive at the school.
- C. Whenever possible, loading and unloading at schools will be done on school premises, away from regular vehicular traffic and playground areas. All school bus loading zones will be properly marked by use of signs and pavement markings. The bus-loading zone will be adequately staffed with administrative personnel or designees to monitor the loading and unloading of students.

Bloomfield Schools Transportation Policy (Staff)

- D. If loading or unloading on the street, the bus will be stopped on the side of the street nearest the school, parallel to the curb, in single file, bumper-to-bumper as close as possible to avoid students from going between the buses. Alternating flashers will not be activated unless the bus is stopped on the traveled portion on the roadway.
 - E. The local school district will review for safety each school bus loading and unloading area on a school district approved cycle. The review cycle will not exceed five years.
4. **Loading Zone**
- A. Drivers must turn the bus engine off and activate the park brake while loading and unloading students at schools. Should the driver be required to leave the driver's seat, the keys shall be removed from the ignition switch.
 - B. Entering Loading Zones A.M.
 - i. First bus pulls up to the unloading line.
 - ii. All other buses pull up behind the bus in front.
 - iii. If there is a crosswalk do not block it.
 - iv. If you need to talk with your students, inform the other buses and allow room so that they may pass if the need arises. Buses that pass must follow passing procedures.
 - v. Allow plenty of room to pass the Special Education bus if the need arises.
 - vi. DO NOT pass a SPECIAL EDUCATION bus while a student is on the lift.
 - vii. Remember, without approval there is no backing a school bus in the loading zone for any reason.
 - viii. All students must scan their bus pass when loading and unloading at all stops.
 - C. Loading Zones P.M.
 - i. Arrive at the first school loading area five minutes before the dismissal bell.
 - ii. Be on your assigned bus and ready when the students arrive to ensure students board and get seated in a quiet and orderly manner.
 - iii. If you have a problem with a student, get it under control as the students are boarding the bus.
 - iv. Those buses that are going directly to the next school should stay in order.
 - v. All students must scan their bus pass when loading and unloading at all stops.
 - D. Passing in the School Loading Zone
 - i. Bus loading zones at the school are not intended to be passing zones. However, at times it may be necessary to pass a bus in a bus-loading zone at one of the schools. If it becomes necessary to pass a bus in the loading zone, these procedures must be followed:
 - 1. Without approval there is no backing a school bus in the loading zone for any reason.
 - 2. Speed limit in loading zone shall not exceed 5 MPH.
 - 3. Move your bus to the extreme left of the bus or buses that you are going to pass.
 - 4. Stop just before you pass each bus, look for students, and then proceed with caution.
 - 5. If you have any questions as to why a bus is taking as long as it is in the loading zone, use your two-way radio to politely and professionally ask the driver(s).
 - 6. Be patient. You have a lot of time to practice safety.

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7. It is not permissible to pass a SPECIAL EDUCATION bus while a student is on the lift.
5. **Loading and Unloading on Route**
 - A. Buses will be loaded or unloaded at established school bus stops only, unless an emergency dictates otherwise.
 - B. No school bus stop will be changed or time schedule altered by the school bus driver without the approval of the Transportation Manager or designee.
 - C. Drivers will not grant permission for a student to load or unload except at the student's regular stop without prior written approval from the Transportation Manager or designee.
 - D. Whenever possible, loading and unloading will occur off the traveled portion of the roadway so that students do not have to cross the roadway.
 - E. When it is not possible for a bus to completely pull off the roadway safely, the driver will remain on the roadway and use procedures outlined in Subsection C. of 6.41.4.12 NMAC.
 - F. All students must scan their bus pass when loading and unloading at all stops.
6. **Proper Procedures for Loading or Unloading Students on the Traveled Portion of the Roadway Subsection C. of 6.41.4.12 (Always use loading lights)**
 - A. Use rear view and side view mirrors to check traffic.
 - B. Reduce speed.
 - C. Activate the amber flashers not less than 300 feet nor more than 1,000 feet in rural areas, or not less than 100 feet nor more than 300 feet in urban areas to warn motorists that the bus is about to stop. The alternating red flasher lights will be activated automatically when the service doors are opened.
 - D. Bring the bus to a full stop, put the bus in neutral, and set the parking brake before opening the service door to load or unload students.
 - E. Check rear-view mirrors, etc. and all traffic lanes to ensure that all required traffic is stopped before allowing students on or off the bus.
 - F. Students required to cross the road will walk a distance of approximately 8 to 10 feet in front of the bus before starting to cross. They should not cross until they have checked traffic and the driver has indicated it is safe to cross. The driver will again check rear-view mirrors and all traffic lanes to ensure all required traffic is stopped before signaling students to proceed. The driver will check to be sure that all students have crossed the roadway safely by use of the crossover mirror and student count.
 - G. The driver will shut the service door, disengaging the alternating red flashers only when all of the students have either boarded the bus and are seated, completely crossed the roadway, or moved a safe distance from the sides of the bus. The bus will then be put in gear and the parking brake released to resume travel.
 - H. If a bus is following or meeting another bus stopped to load or unload students with school bus flashers in operation, it is permissible for the bus not unloading or loading students to use school bus flashers.
7. **Loading and Unloading on Multiple Lane or Divided Roadway**
 - A. Whenever possible all loading and unloading will be done off the traveled portion of the roadway.
 - B. If stopping on the roadway is necessary, the bus will stop in the right-hand or outside traffic lane.

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- C. When stopped on the roadway, buses will load or unload in the right lane of the roadway. In no event will students be loaded or unloaded in a designated turn lane or in a lane immediately adjacent to a designated turn lane.
 - D. On a highway with divided and/or multiple traffic lanes in each direction, school buses will load and unload students only on the side of the highway on which they live.
- 8. School Buses Operating on Interstate Highways**
- A. On interstate highways, school buses will be operated according to the following procedures:
 - i. The bus will not make any stops except in an emergency, nor will any student load or unload while the bus is on the interstate. All loading or unloading will be done at points off the interstate, either at an interchange, service, or frontage road.
 - ii. No school bus will cross over to the opposite roadway or make any other similar maneuver except at interchanges and then only in a manner consistent with the proper procedures at any given interchange.
 - iii. School buses using portions of the interstate will operate only as “express” or “through” buses between two given points.
- 9. Railroad Crossings**
- A. The following procedures will apply at railroad crossings:
 - i. When students are on board, the driver will, before crossing any track or tracks of a railroad, activate the four-way hazard lights and will bring the bus to a full and complete stop not less than 15 feet or more than 50 feet from the rail nearest the front of the bus. If the school bus is required to stop after the school bus has crossed the railroad tracks, the rear portion of the school bus will not be positioned less than 15 feet from the rail nearest the bus.
 - ii. When approaching a railroad crossing, the driver will carefully observe traffic and reduce speed in advance of the stop. On multiple lane roadways, all stops will be made in the extreme right traffic lane.
 - iii. While completely stopped, the driver will fully open the service door and will listen and look in both directions along the track or tracks for approaching trains or other vehicles. The service door will remain open until the rear of the bus clears all tracks.
 - iv. The side window to the driver’s immediate left will be opened, and all noisy equipment (radio, fans, etc.) will be shut off until the bus has cleared the railroad crossing.
 - v. If the view in either direction is unclear or is obstructed in any way, no portion of the bus will be moved onto the tracks until, by personal visual inspection, and after parking and securing the vehicle, the driver is certain that no train is approaching. In no instance will a signal indicating safety be considered as conclusive or serve to abrogate this precaution.
 - vi. Drivers will, in every instance, cross in a gear that does not necessitate changing gears while traversing the railroad crossing, and will not under any circumstances shift gears while the bus is crossing the railroad tracks.
 - vii. In the event a train has just passed through the crossing, no bus driver will drive the bus onto the track or tracks until the train has sufficiently cleared the crossing and the driver is certain that no other train is approaching on an adjacent track.

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- viii. If a stop and go traffic light controls the movement of traffic at the railroad crossing, the driver need not stop unless the traffic light indicates to stop.
- ix. No school bus driver will drive the bus through, around, or under any crossing gate or barrier while the barrier is closed or in the process of being opened or closed unless instructed to do so by the proper authority.
- x. No part of the bus will be placed near the tracks until the driver knows conclusively that the crossing can be made safely.
- xi. When a bus stops adjacent to a railroad track, the driver will not proceed until all passengers are silent.

10. School Bus Alternating Flashers Will NOT Be Used

- A. When the school bus is completely off the traveled portion of the roadway or on school grounds to load or unload students.
- B. At railroad crossings, traffic lights or at any other time the bus is required to stop except to load or unload students on the traveled portion of the roadway.
- C. Note: Pursuant to section 66-1-4 (15N), NMSA, 1978 "roadway" means that portion of a highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular traffic, exclusive of berm or shoulder.

11. School Bus Safety Equipment

- A. All school buses used to transport students on regular to and from routes and district-sponsored activities will meet New Mexico School Bus Construction Standards and the New Mexico School Bus Inspection requirements.
 - 1. All school bus drivers will use the seat belt at all times when the vehicle is in motion. Seat belts are required of students only on buses of Gross Vehicle Weight of 10,000 pounds or less, or when a specific student requires a seat belt.
 - 2. Each school bus will carry a first aid kit with contents as specified in New Mexico School Bus Construction Standards.
 - 3. Each school bus will be equipped with at least one UL-approved pressurized dry-chemical fire extinguisher complete with hose. The fire extinguisher will have a total rating of 2A10BC or greater and meet New Mexico School Bus Construction Standards. The extinguisher will be kept in the driver's compartment, fully charged, and in good working condition. Each driver will be familiar with operating the fire extinguisher.
 - 4. Each school bus will be equipped with a minimum of three triangular warning reflectors, and the driver will be knowledgeable as to their operation and proper placement.
 - 5. Each driver will use reflectors in the event of prolonged stops on the roadway as follows:
 - a. Place at approximately 100 feet in front and back of the disabled vehicle in the center of the traffic lane occupied by the disabled vehicle.
 - b. Place at the traffic side of the disabled vehicle, not less than 10 feet from the front or rear.
 - c. If the vehicle is disabled within 500 feet of a curve, crest of a hill, or other obstruction to view, the driver will place the warning device in that direction to afford ample warning. The warning device must not be less than 100 feet or more than 500 feet from the disabled vehicle.

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6. The hazard mode warning lights will be used when necessary to stop on the shoulder or the traveled portion of the roadway if the bus is temporarily disabled or it is necessary to stop for any reason other than loading and unloading operations. Hazard mode warning lights will also be used when the speed of the bus is less than one-half of the posted speed limits.
7. No item that will block the aisle or exits will be permitted on the bus.
8. In transporting musical instruments, shop projects, or other school projects, the following will apply.
 - a. No item will occupy needed seating space.
 - b. No item will be placed in the driver's compartment.
 - c. All items carried by students will be under their control at all times and carried on their laps or between seats. The aisle and exits will not be blocked.
9. The emergency door and/or windows will not be fastened or wired in any fashion as to prevent opening from the inside or outside while the vehicle is in operation.
10. Loose items such as tools or brooms, etc. will be securely stored or fastened if carried inside the bus.
11. Trailers will not be attached to a school bus at any time.

12. Lighted Headlamp

- A. It is recommended that the low beam headlamp be displayed during daylight hours when transporting students on routes or activity trips.

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Section 4

School Activity Trips

Travel for school sponsored student trips in excess of a 100 mile radius of the school district must have prior approval of the superintendent or designee.

Buses will not travel more than 500 miles from Bloomfield.

1. Funding

- A. School activity trips shall be paid from budgeted activity funds and **NOT** from to-and-from transportation funds.

2. Qualifications of School Activity Bus Driver

- A. Activity bus drivers operating a school bus shall meet all school bus driver qualifications and licensing requirements.
- B. The sponsor shall not have the additional responsibility of driving the school activity bus.
- C. The activity bus driver will be trained in mountain pass driving prior to transporting passengers over the mountain passes.

3. On-Duty and Driving Time

- A. The following conditions shall be met in order for a driver to be considered "off-duty"
 - i. The driver is relieved of duty and all responsibility for the care and custody of the vehicle, its accessories, or any cargo or passengers.
 - ii. The duration of the driver's relief from duty is a specified, adequate period of time to allow the driver to rest and to pursue activities of his/her choosing off the premises where the vehicle is located.
- B. Hours of Service
 - i. Federal and state laws must be strictly adhered to, as to the length of workday and amount of rest for the activity bus driver. As stated in FMCSR Title 49 CFR parts 395.0-395.13, Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. # 201, et. seq.), and New Mexico State Board of Education Regulation 6.41.4.
- C. The following requirements apply to drivers of school-sponsored activity vehicles:
 - i. A driver operating a motor vehicle for the purpose of transporting students to or from a school sponsored activity shall not have more than ten hours driving time, or more than 8 hours continuous driving time. A driver shall not be permitted to be on-duty a total of more than fifteen hours in a twenty-four-hour period. (Our standard requires that after a four hour period of time or 200 miles of travel, the driver will be allowed at least a thirty minute off-duty rest period.)
 - ii. "On-duty" time is defined as that time related to the servicing or operation of the vehicle, or those duties assigned or necessary that are related to a specific activity trip such as staying with the bus for security purposes or assisting with the supervision of students. (If two drivers are assigned to a bus the time spent as a passenger is considered "on-duty".)
 - iii. "Off-duty" time is defined as the period(s) of time when a driver is not on-duty, is not required to be in readiness to work, or is not under any responsibility for performing work. However, it does not include "sleeper berth time". Our standard is a minimum of thirty minutes to qualify for "off-duty" time credit.
 - iv. Drivers reporting for work driving vehicles to be occupied by school children shall have had at least eight hours off-duty time immediately preceding reporting for such duty.

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4. Responsibilities of Activity Bus Drivers

- A. The activity trip bus driver shall be responsible for the bus/vehicle at all times, and also has the following additional responsibilities:
- B. Compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations.
- C. Adhere to on duty time and driving time.
- D. Monitor total weekly hours in order to avoid over time.
- E. Have an open line of communication with sponsors.
- F. Make sure the sponsor is aware of departure time, etc.
- G. Clarify trip expectations with the sponsor prior to departure.
- H. Completion of a trip ticket approved by the Transportation Manager when applicable.
- I. Assumption of safety responsibilities for all passengers while they are in the vehicle.
- J. Drivers will not participate in an activity that may jeopardize their ability to drive.
- K. Notify the Transportation Manager of all emergencies that arise.
- L. Maintain all records pertinent to the trip, including accurate trip tickets.
- M. Ensure that prior to departure and the return journey, the bus is clean and completely serviced and inspected.
- N. Notify the Transportation Manager for the repair of the bus if any damage is done while on an activity/field trip.
- O. Buses/vehicles will not be fueled while students are on board except circumstances when it is impractical to unload.
- P. If weather conditions are such that the bus driver has concerns about road conditions the bus driver may shut the bus down in a safe place and wait until conditions improve.

5. Responsibilities of Sponsors

- A. Activity sponsors shall be responsible for students on and off the vehicle and for the following
 - i. A bus request form must be in the transportation office a minimum of 2 weeks prior to trip.
 - ii. Prepare and submit itinerary and trip requests in accordance with the local Board of Education's policy.
 - iii. Assure that students are at the departure point(s) at the appointed time.
 - iv. Supervise the loading and unloading of the vehicle.
 - v. Assure that bus rules are followed.
 - vi. In an evacuation of the bus/vehicle, supervision of students and keeping them together.
 - vii. All arrangements on overnight trips for meals and lodging, including the driver.
 - viii. Provide for adequate rest stops.
 - ix. Maintenance of a student roster and seating chart taking roll each time students load and unload the bus.
 - x. The sponsor shall not have the additional responsibility of driving the school activity bus.
 - xi. The sponsor shall travel on the activity bus/vehicle.
 - xii. Ensure that there is a school employee, other than the driver(s) on each bus while students are present.

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- xiii. When large groups are traveling it is strongly recommended that each activity bus will have at least one trip chaperon as well as the trip sponsor. The trip chaperon will assist the trip sponsor in maintaining student discipline. The chaperon need not be a school employee.
- xiv. The sponsor is responsible for any cleanup of bodily fluids. Blood borne pathogen kits will be provided.
- xv. If accommodations such as a lift are required, the sponsor must notify the transportation department by making the notation on the trip ticket.
- xvi. Failure to cancel a trip in a timely manner is cause for a charge to the sponsoring group for the driver's time. If the Transportation Department is not notified in time to contact the driver and the driver leaves their house to come to pick up the vehicle it will be considered as not timely and a charge will be made to the sponsoring group. The charge will be for 2 hours pay at the current rate or route amount if a substitute was scheduled for a route driver. If the scheduled trip was for less than 2 hours the full amount of that trip shall be paid.
- xvii. If the sponsor plans to stop at a shopping mall this request must be approved by the school principal. (Please understand that some shopping malls require a student to adult ratio of 5 to 1).
- xviii. Assist in maintaining a clean bus. If the bus is returned dirty a cleaning charge will be assessed.
- xix. Monitor and assure that appropriate music/material is played in the media.
- xx. Eating on the bus is not recommended; however, gum, cans, glass bottles, fountain drinks, ice cream and sunflower seeds are PROHIBITED.
- xxi. No vehicle may carry more than the rated seating capacity. No standees or temporary seats are permitted.

6. Activity Trip Tickets

- A. The activity trip ticket must be carried on the bus/vehicle for trips outside the district's boundaries.
- B. Upon request the driver must present the activity trip ticket to any State Police Officer, Department of Transportation Officer, or staff member of the Public Education Department.
- C. An activity trip ticket is not required if a commercial common carrier is used to transport students.
- D. When a shuttle is requested, the Sponsor shall indicate on the trip ticket if the bus and driver should remain on-call. The driver can either remain with the group or be available by phone. In either case time will be charged for the entire trip.

7. School Activity Vehicles

- A. A school bus assigned to a regular bus route during route times shall not be diverted to provide transportation for activity purposes.
- B. Activity transportation shall be scheduled at times, which shall not conflict with school buses fulfilling the primary obligation of providing transportation to and from school.
- C. Overcrowding of regular school buses shall not be permitted in order to free certain vehicles for activity trips.
- D. Vehicles purchased for the purpose of transporting students on school sponsored activities shall meet all applicable United States Department of Transportation Federal Motor Vehicle Standard.

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- E. All vehicles with the rated seating capacity of 10 or more occupants shall meet all applicable requirements for the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for bus bodies and chassis and New Mexico Minimum standards for School Buses.
 - F. The use of school-owned vehicles with a rated seating capacity of 9 or fewer do not meet federal and state standards for school buses. However, it is permitted under Federal law provided they meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard for their category.
 - G. If a school vehicle other than the activity bus is needed to transport equipment, the sponsor will make arrangements for that vehicle to be driven by someone other than him/herself. The sponsor shall travel on the activity bus.
 - H. If an approved school bus with a qualified driver for the activity trip is not used, the district should consider the value of the activity against the risks involved in transporting students. Although qualifying and certifying staff members through additional training may require time and some cost, the benefits of increased safety and reduced liability are critical.
8. **Private Vehicles**
- A. The use of private vehicles to transport students is prohibited.
9. **Activity Driver**
- A. Activity drivers operating a district vehicle for school sponsored activities shall comply with the following prior to operating a district vehicle.
 - i. A new driver who has not been previously employed or certified will be required to successfully complete a minimum of 12 hours of training.
 - ii. The pre-service training will be completed by a school bus driver instructor certified by the NMPED Transportation Division.
 - B. Pre-service training will include the following:
 - i. Classroom – four hours. One hour on familiarization with the vehicle and equipment. The remaining hours will include a review of standards for providing transportation services to eligible students, safety policies and regulations, general motor vehicle operating procedures and passenger management.
 - ii. First Aid and CPR – six hours. (Will accept documentation of previous training.)
 - iii. Nationally recognized or state approved Defensive Driving Course (DDC). (Will accept documentation of previous training.)
 - iv. It is the driver's responsibility to adhere to on-duty time and driving time.
 - C. Driver trainer renewal
 - a. Defensive Driving Course – A Defensive Driving Course refresher is required every three years.
 - b. A current First Aid and CPR card is required.
 - c. An activity driver refresher course is required every three years.
10. **Use of District Vehicle by District Employee**
- A. Before any BSD employee can drive a district owned vehicle, they shall have completed a Defensive Driving Course and have a record of their attendance on file with the Transportation Department.
 - B. A BSD employee cannot be reimbursed for using their own vehicle unless they have completed a Defensive Driving Course (DDC) and have a copy of their Certificate of Completion on file with the Transportation Department.
 - C. Cell phone usage while driving is strictly prohibited. Usage is allowed only in case of an extreme emergency. The bus must be stopped and secured in a safe location. Violation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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- D. Failure to comply with this policy is cause for disciplinary action.
- 11. **Definition of On-Duty and Off-Duty by NMSDOE Standards**
 - A. On-Duty - Time related to the driving, servicing, or operation of the bus and/or vehicle.
 - B. Off-Duty - The driver is relieved of duty and all responsibility for the care and custody of the vehicle, its accessories, or any cargo or passengers.
- 12. **Activity/Field Trip Request**
 - A. Athletic Travel Requests
 - i. The athletic department should notify the Transportation Department of the dates of the state tournaments at the START of each session.
 - ii. All athletic travel requests should be scheduled at the start of each season. The requests should include as much information as possible so that tentative arrangements can be made.
 - B. Other Travel
 - i. All activity trips, field trips and shuttle requests must be made a minimum of two weeks prior to departure with sufficient information for the Transportation Department to make proper arrangements. Each school should have a person designated for official trip requests. It is recommended that the trip sponsor check with the Transportation Department on availability of buses before trip plans are finalized.
 - C. Length of Trip
 - i. Buses will not travel more than 500 miles from Bloomfield.
- 13. **Travel Expenses**
 - A. Activity Bus Driver Pay Schedule
 - i. Pay is based on the current salary schedule set by the school district for activity bus drivers.
 - ii. All on-duty hours are based on a salary schedule.
 - B. Overtime
 - i. If the trip schedule shows that the trip will take over 40 hours in any given 7-day work week, the overtime will be charged to the sponsoring group.
 - ii. If a driver works over 40 hours in any given 7-day work week because a sponsoring group did not follow their schedule, the overtime will be charged to the sponsoring group.
 - iii. If a driver works over 40 hours in any given 7-day work week because a sponsoring group turns in their trip request and/or scheduling late, the overtime will be charged to the sponsoring group.
 - iv. If a driver works overtime because of Transportation Department scheduling, the overtime rate will be charged to general operating funds.
 - v. If the driver's time for the week goes over 40 hours in any given 7-day work week, the last sponsoring group will pay the overtime rate.
 - vi. If a driver is requested to work on a federal holiday, double-time hourly rate will be charged to the sponsoring group.
- 14. **Trips**
 - A. Shuttle:
 - i. Drivers must have two hours of off-duty time between shuttles.
 - B. Type of Shuttle:
 - i. Take the entire group and pick up at a later schedule time.

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timely manner the driver can charge the sponsoring group for a meal.

16. **Bus Driver Assistants**

- B. Bus driver assistants will be paid according to the current bus driver assistant salary schedule and be covered by the same guidelines as DRIVER'S EXPENSES.

Section 5

Transporting Special Education Students

While the following rules and regulations may not cover all situations that may exist for the various exceptionalities, they do serve as guidelines to assist in the operation of special education transportation programs. These policies serve in addition to other rules and regulations outlined in this publication.

1. Identification of Transportation Needs for Student with Disabilities:

- A. Transportation needs for students with disabilities who request transportation as a related service shall be determined and specified on a individual case-by-case basis by each student's Individual Education Program (IEP) committee. The committee shall utilize evaluation information from a variety of sources, including but not limited to parent information, other related services assessments, medical information, assistive technology assessment, and other information from the student's multidisciplinary team evaluation.
- B. Decisions regarding transportation as a related service shall be guided by the principle of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Therefore, students with disabilities shall be transported with neighborhood peers who are not disabled unless restricted by health or safety considerations. When modification to standard transportation is necessary, transportation personnel shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of the IEP. The IEP document shall clearly state the transportation needs/modifications identified by the IEP team. If future circumstances require significant changes in services, any team member, including transportation personnel, may request that the committee reconvene to consider the student's transportation needs.

2. Provisions of Transportation for Students with Disabilities:

- A. Modifications to standard transportation services shall be required through the IEP process and shall be stated in the IEP document.

3. IEP Committee Responsibilities

- A. The IEP Committee will conduct an inventory of each child's needs as they relate to school bus transportation. If the committee determines that regular transportation services are appropriate, such determination will be documented in the student's IEP.
- B. When special transportation provisions are necessary and transportation is required as a related service the following must take place:
 - i. A representative from the Bloomfield Schools Transportation Department must be part of the IEP committee.
 - ii. The type of vehicle and equipment must be determined in advance. An example of special equipment is:
 - 1. Wheelchair lift.
 - 2. Special design car seats.
 - 3. Vests to provide torso and/or head support.
 - iii. Any significant medical problems should be documented.
 - iv. Alternative emergency drop-off points and telephone numbers of specified contact persons shall be provided.
 - v. Student behavior expectations must be clearly understood.
 - vi. Location of bus stop identified.
- C. A period of (5) school days may be required to reconfigure a route after the IEP committee has decided on the nature of transportation service required.

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4. Student Behavior:

- A. All local disciplinary policies shall apply to all students regardless of their disabilities who violate state and local school transportation rules unless the IEP requires TRANSPORTATION AS A RELATED SERVICE.
- B. If transportation is a related service, the following provisions shall be followed:
 - i. The IEP Committee shall determine whether the conduct of a student with a disability is the result of that disability before long term suspension (10 consecutive or cumulative days during the school year) or the expulsion of that student from transportation services.
 - ii. If the IEP Committee determines that the conduct of a student with a disability is a manifestation of their disability, that student may not be subject to the regular disciplinary rules and procedures.
 - iii. The student's parents shall be notified of an IEP meeting before any change in the student's special education placement.
 - iv. A termination of the student's education for more than ten days, either cumulative or consecutive, constitutes a change in placement.
 - v. If an IEP meeting needs to reconvene because of transportation problems the Director of Special Education or the Transportation Manager shall ensure an IEP is arranged.
 - 1. An IEP Committee shall reconvene to determine if the student's conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability and that changes in transportation services are appropriate.
 - 2. A representative from Bloomfield Schools Transportation Department shall be part of this IEP Committee.
 - 3. The student's parents are notified immediately, by phone or mail, of the student's suspension and of the time, purpose, and location of the IEP meeting, individuals to be in attendance, and their right to attend.
 - 4. A component is included in the IEP that addresses the behavioral needs of the student while on the bus.
 - vi. When a student's behavior endangers the safety of others, the student shall be suspended from the transportation vehicle according to the Transportation Policies and State Board of Education Regulations.
 - vii. Provisions for removal and reinstatement of transportation services for students with disabilities shall be specified in the local board of education's policies and in the student's IEP. In the interim, the student with the disability may require other means to access educational services. Any change in related service(s) transportation must be made through the IEP process, and the procedural safeguards specified in the State Board of Education Regulations shall apply.
 - viii. Nothing contained herein shall prevent the emergency suspension of any student with a disability who endangers or reasonably appears to endanger the health, welfare, or safety to himself, other student(s), the bus driver, bus assistant, or the school bus.
 - ix. Significant medical problems should be documented, especially the possibility of seizures, etc.
 - x. Alternate emergency drop-off points and telephone numbers of specified contact persons will be obtained.

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- xi. Late registration or placement of a student into a different program after school usually affects routing and time schedules of one or all students on the bus. Several days may be required before all adjustments are made and the start of transportation services for a particular student. A minimum of five (5) days planning time is usually required. Changes should not be made late in the school year unless absolutely necessary.

5. District Administration Responsibilities

- A. The designated school district administrator is responsible for implementing the policies set by the local board of education, and for promoting public understanding of and support for the school systems special education transportation program.
 - i. Loading and Unloading
 - 1. A.M. Unloading: Building administrator or designee will be on site at the a.m. unloading area. The bus driver or aide will not be allowed to leave special education students unattended.
 - 2. P.M. Dismissal: Building administrator or designee will have the students ready at dismissal time. The bus driver will not be required to wait. The driver and/or bus aide will not be allowed to leave the bus to search for unaccounted students. Once the bus has departed, the driver will not be required to return to the school. The building administrator or designee will be required to make other arrangements for the student to be transported home.
 - ii. The local school district will develop a policy relative to bus suspension procedures.
 - iii. Upon receiving a written complaint, the appropriate school official shall respond as soon as possible. An immediate response to a problem will be of great benefit to all concerned.
 - iv. Suspension from the bus does not mean that a student is suspended from school. (The parent or caretaker will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school.)
 - v. In the event that it is necessary to suspend a student from school as well as the bus, the local board policy on long and short term suspension will apply.
 - vi. The principal or designee will be available until all students have been properly delivered on their route. All drivers are to be informed of persons who have been designated to take custody of students. Building administrators or designee will be responsible for providing the drivers or transportation department with names and phone numbers of these caretakers.
- B. **Mid-Day and Regular PM routes** (Kindergarten and below, Special Needs)
 - i. If no one is home to receive a student, the driver will contact the school immediately in an attempt to contact the parents/guardians/caretakers.
 - ii. If unable to make contact, the transportation office will contact the school administrator and inform them that the student will be brought back to the school with an estimated time of arrival after the completion of the bus route.
 - iii. At this time, the school administrator will attempt to contact the parent/guardian/caretaker to pick up the child at the school or make other arrangements. (Due to the difference in PM bus schedules, mid-day students should not be placed on PM buses).

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- iv. Failure of parents or caretaker to be available to receive student(s) from the bus at the scheduled time may be a cause for the student to be suspended from riding the bus.

6. **Teacher Responsibilities and Assistants**

- A. Enhance a safe and successful bus operation through regular and continuing education of all persons involved in the special education transportation process. The teacher, together with the bus driver and/or the bus aide, makes students aware of their responsibilities on the bus. With careful planning, the special education school bus can be a valuable extension of the classroom experience.
- B. Be familiar with state and local policies on special education transportation.
- C. Communicate to parents or caretakers and students the state and local policies and regulations for special education transportation in order to promote understanding and support for the school systems special education transportation program.
- D. Communicate regularly with the bus driver and/or bus assistant regarding the special needs of students.
- E. Provide information to the driver and/or bus aide regarding behavior modification so that consistency can be maintained. The teacher should explain the style of discipline used in the classroom and suggest techniques which work with specific students, realizing that the bus is an entirely different setting.
- F. Discuss the teacher's expectations for bus behavior with the driver before school begins. This should be done in order to clarify the teacher's and bus driver's expectations for the students' bus behavior.
- G. Establish consistent procedures for loading and unloading students.
- H. Have the students ready at dismissal time.
- I. Ensure that students who regularly soil their clothing are clean before boarding the bus.
- J. Load all of the students at one designated time in the afternoon. Coordinate loading times with the other teachers if there are several special education programs in the school.
- K. Distribute classroom materials in the classroom before the students get on the bus to return home. Distributing materials on the bus creates an atmosphere of confusion.
- L. Notify the Transportation Department when a parent has picked up a student from school so that the driver does not have an unnecessary delay. Notify the Transportation Department when a parent brings a student to school late. Advanced notice to the driver will reduce the possibility of a student being inadvertently left at school.
- M. Tell the driver what kind of a day the student has had, especially if it has been bad. This helps alert the driver to a potential problem. It is most effective to tell the driver quietly in front of the student, so that the student realizes that the driver is aware and can make adjustments.
- N. Instruct the student on proper bus behavior and school bus safety as a part of classroom discussions and activities. The teacher should assist the student to develop an attitude of respect and courtesy toward the driver and bus assistant.
- O. Refrain from asking the bus driver to change the routing pattern and pick-up or dismissal times as the driver is not allowed to change or modify bus routes.

7. **Parent or Caretaker Responsibility**

- A. **Keep student information current.**
- B. Have the student ready before the bus arrives and, when necessary, be with the student at the bus stop.

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- C. Encourage the student to obey safety rules and regulations and encourage proper bus behavior.
 - D. When the students are delivered to the assigned address at the end of each school day, the driver will NOT be allowed to leave the student unattended. Parents are responsible for making arrangements to have a designated responsible person to receive the student. A parent or caretaker may request permission to leave a student unattended through the IEP process and shall be stated in the IEP document.
 - E. Have all necessary supplies, materials, etc., in a pouch or a packet labeled with the child's name. In consideration of student safety, large articles which block the aisles, emergency door, or service door of a school bus will not be allowed on the bus.
 - F. Do not send students with food or drink on the bus. The danger of a student choking on food is a high risk factor.
 - G. Know where the student is to be picked up each morning and delivered in the afternoon. In the event that the student needs assistance to get to or from, or on or off the bus, the parent cooperates by making arrangements for bringing the student to the bus, and for picking up the student on the return trip.
 - H. In the event that the student does not plan to attend school on a specified day, the parent/caretaker shall notify the Transportation Department by phone in advance when possible or inform the bus driver when the bus arrives at the student's house.
 - I. Failure of parents or caretaker to be available to receive student(s) from the bus at the scheduled time may be a reason for the student to be suspended from riding the bus.
 - J. Ensure that children who regularly soil their clothing are clean before boarding the bus.
 - K. Provide a student emergency information card which includes emergency phone numbers and/or address of a responsible person to be contacted.
 - L. Give at least a full five-school-day notice concerning any changes in pick-up and drop-off address with the school secretary or designee. The driver is not allowed to change or modify a bus route. Do not ask a driver to violate this policy.
 - M. Transport his or her student in the event of a necessary bus suspension.
8. **Qualifications for Special Education School Bus Drivers**
- A. The school district administrator or local transportation provider shall adhere to all applicable federal and state employment requirements when employing, re-employing or retaining a school bus driver.
 - B. Drivers operating a school bus shall meet all school bus driver qualifications and licensing requirements.
9. **Qualifications for Bus Assistants**
- A. A school bus assistant shall be provided when the IEP requires further supervision for a student with a disability. A school bus assistant shall be trained as outlined in the State Department of Education's Technical Assistance Manual - Transporting Children with Disabilities and BSDS policy.
 - i. A bus assistant shall be provided on buses equipped with a wheel chair lift, when necessary and/or required by law or regulation.
 - ii. Bus assistants shall complete a course on providing Transportation as a Related Service to students with disabilities. Bus assistants shall have a current First Aid/CPR certification.
 - iii. Bus assistants shall complete 16 hours in-service each year.
 - iv. Bus assistants will be a minimum age of 18.

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10. Responsibilities for Drivers and Bus Aides

- A. The following rules and regulations are applicable to drivers and aides, but do not cover all situations which exist for various exceptionalities. They do serve as guidelines for the operation of special education transportation programs. The driver and assistant will:
- i. Obey all regular school bus operational regulations (unless exceptions are noted), state and local policies and traffic laws.
 - ii. Maintain and keep current confidential information such as emergency cards and other required reports. This information is to be maintained in accordance with the Family Education and Privacy Act and state and local special education regulations.
 - iii. Refrain from administering any medication.
 - iv. Withhold from a student any type of food (candy, gum, drink, etc.) unless the written permission of parents or caretakers is granted.
 - v. Exercise patience, understanding, and mature judgment in working with a student.
 - vi. Communicate effectively with parents and school staff.
 - vii. Utilize and safely operate the special equipment needed for each student's seating, loading and unloading.
 - viii. Know the safest and most direct route to a hospital or recognized medical center.
 - ix. Arrange the seating of students, where possible, to prevent emotional or physical disturbances, but allow "normal" interaction between students. The special education teacher for these students may be of great assistance in these situations.
 - x. Explain bus rules to students and enforce them, remembering to:
 1. Be firm -- but gentle.
 2. Be patient -- but persistent.
 3. Always be consistent.
 - xi. Maintain discipline and report to the proper school authorities and/or parents any unusual episodes, attitudes, etc., immediately and in detail, because they may have medical implications. Any student who is a threat to the safety of the other students, themselves, and/or the driver should not be permitted to ride the bus. Administrative procedures will be followed when exclusion of a student is considered.
 - xii. Be willing to learn how to care for each student under the many circumstances that might occur while the students are on the bus.
 - xiii. Know the appropriate procedures to take in case of a traffic accident or breakdown as they relate to the exceptionalities of the students.
 - xiv. Maintain the bus schedule for pick-up and drop-off of students as closely as safety will permit.
 - xv. Follow the established route unless there is an emergency.
 - xvi. Make sure that a student is not left unattended in the bus or at the p.m. drop-off point. The driver must contact the Transportation Department if no one is present at the stop to meet the student.
 - xvii. Communicate with school personnel and parents when a student is on medication and what possible effects the medication will have on the student being transported.

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- xviii. Record when each student is behaving abnormally for their condition and advise the appropriate officials accordingly.
- xix. Be mentally alert and follow the plan for emergency indicated on the student information card when problems or abnormal reactions occur.
- xx. Assist each student in meeting therapeutic needs as indicated by appropriate school personnel such as learning to get on and off without assistance.
- xxi. In addition to the above requests, the special education aide will:
 - 1. Assist in the loading and unloading of students.
 - 2. Maintain control of students while on the bus.
 - 3. Take care of any special needs of the students while they are on the bus and while they are being loaded and unloaded.
 - 4. Assist the bus driver in times of need and during an emergency.
 - 5. Assist the bus driver with the daily routine on the bus.
 - 6. Assistant is primarily responsible for operating the lift door.

11. Loading and Unloading Students

- A. The bus driver will follow the same loading and unloading procedures as regular transportation.
- B. The type and severity of the exceptionality will usually determine where the actual bus stop will be located within the following guidelines:
 - i. Students who cannot be left unattended will be loaded and unloaded.
 - ii. Other students may be able to walk to and from the bus stop. This may be required as part of their therapy. Written directions will be provided to the driver by the parent or caretaker and the school district.
 - iii. The bus stop will be determined by the IEP team upon recommendation from the doctor, special education administrators, and parents.

12. Transportation of Medication

- A. The bus driver or assistant **will not** be responsible for transporting or administering medication.
- B. Should a student's IEP call for the administration of medication during a trip or on a route, the Special Education Department will provide a trained person to administer the medication. Otherwise, medication will not be administered.

13. Transportation Confidential Emergency Card

- A. In order for the driver and/or assistant to be generally informed by local school officials concerning the physical, mental, and/or emotional disabilities of each student, a card will be provided by the school for each student.
- B. Each card will include, but is not limited to, the following information:
 - i. Student's name, date of birth, school, school year and bus number.
 - ii. Parent's name.
 - iii. Address, with loading and unloading instructions, for both a.m. and p.m.
 - iv. Home or cell phone and emergency phone numbers, i.e., doctor, parent(s), and teacher.
 - v. Nature of student's exceptionality as it pertains to transportation needs and special bus provisions.
 - vi. Suggested steps to be taken by the driver or the assistant in the event of illness, seizure, etc., while riding the bus.

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- vii. Emergency medical information, medication students are under, and special instructions for attending physicians.
- viii. These cards must be treated as confidential records.

14. Discipline and Student Rights

- A. The following suggested procedures will protect the students' rights and maintain order on the bus:
 - i. The driver and the assistant should attempt to handle infractions through discussions with students and/or reassignment of seats. (Sometimes a call to the parents will improve behavior.)
 - ii. First offenses require, at the minimum, a notification to the student and parent(s) by phone or in person. Second or subsequent offenses or infractions of the rules may require a conference with the student, parents, driver, and school administrators and could result in a period of suspension of the student's bus riding privileges.
 - iii. In case of serious or recurring misconduct, a student's bus riding privileges may be promptly suspended for acts which jeopardize the safe operation of the bus and/or the safety of the other passengers on board.

15. Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order

- A. All efforts to revive a student will be made including a call to "911" for emergency assistance.

16. Comparable Travel Time

- A. Transportation time for students with disabilities will be comparable to that provided to their peers without disabilities. Whenever possible, students will ride on regular route buses. Students with disabilities, whose IEP dictates special transportation needs may require a variance to the comparable travel time policy. This shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the student's IEP committee and shall be clearly stated in the IEP document.

17. Delivering Student into the Hands of A Responsible Individual

- A. The efficient pick-up and delivery of our students is an important aspect of the district's services. To see that this process functions as effectively as possible, we have set up the following procedures that have caused concern in the transportation of our special needs students:
 - i. In situations where the student(s)' special needs dictate that they be delivered into the hands of a responsible individual and a responsible individual is unavailable:
 - 1. The driver will notify the Transportation Department by two-way radio. While the bus is continuing on the route, the Transportation Department and/or school will attempt to make contact by phone with a responsible individual. A second attempt to deliver the student at their primary address will be made if practical.
 - 2. If a responsible person cannot be contacted and arrangements made, the student will be transported to the Transportation Dept. and the parent will be required to pick them up. If school personnel are not able to contact a parent, the student will be turned over to CYFD or Law enforcement. After three such incidents, the student will lose riding privileges.

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18. **Transportation of Specialized Personnel**

- A. Specialized personnel (i.e. licensed nurses, special education assistants, or other designated persons) will be assigned to a bus route only after a decision has been made by the I.E.P. committee to provide this type of service to a student or students. The Special Education Department will be responsible for the cost of the specialized personnel.

19. **Transportation of Animals to Accompany a Student with Disabilities**

- A. The health and welfare of passengers shall be taken into consideration and only those animals authorized by an IEP will be allowed.
- B. When a student's IEP stipulates the need for an animal to accompany him or her to and from school, the following conditions must be met and made available to the Transportation Department.
 - i. The animal must have proper certification and training.
 - ii. The animal must have up to date immunization records.
 - iii. The animal must be muzzled.