



Vancouver Island West School District 84  
**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM**

**SECTION B**  
**BUS DRIVING**

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**REFERENCES:**

See the District Policy Manual on [www.sd84.bc.ca](http://www.sd84.bc.ca) for the following policies:

- District Policy B.13, *Bloodborne Pathogens*
- District Policy C.2, *Conduct on School Buses (Student)*
- District Policy D.13, *Violence in the Workplace*
- District Policy E.5, *Child Abuse*
- District Policy E.6, *Damage or Theft by Students or Others of Minority Age*
- District Policy E.33, *Student Conduct*
- District Policy E.46, *Treatment of Head Lice*

Name	Office	Cell	Home
RCMP, Ambulance, Fire	911		
Peter Skilton, Operations Supervisor	250-283-2241	250-203-3623	250-283-9261
Arlene Fehr, Principal, GRSS	250-283-2538		250-283-7367
Deane Johnson, Principal, CMESS	250-934-6305	778-400-7222	250-934-6659
Natalie Nelson, Principal, ZESS	250-761-4227	250-713-6150	250-956-3666
Lawrence Tarasoff, Superintendent of Schools/Secretary-Treasurer	250-283-2241	250-706-2986	250-283-2332
Annie James, HR Administrator	250-283-2241	250-203-4432	250-283-7235
Stephen Larre, Principal, Spec Ed, Student Learning and Technology	250-283-2241	250-208-4232	250-283-2317
Scott Cobbe, Principal, RWES	250-934-6505		250-283-2144
Philip Parkes, Vice-Principal, NSOP	250-283-2538	250-898-9160	250-898-9160



Vancouver Island West School District 84  
**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM**

**SECTION B**  
**BUS DRIVING**

**INTRODUCTION**

Many students are transported each day to Vancouver Island West schools. The safety of these students and the efficiency of the District's transportation program depend on the men and women who accept the important responsibility of driving our school buses.

This is intended to be a living updatable program for SD84 school bus drivers. We hope that this program answers many questions and gives school bus drivers the necessary guidelines to perform effectively and efficiently.

Driving a school bus involves much more than merely driving a vehicle on the highways.

The school bus driver must also be responsible for the safety and welfare of children, must set a good example, must promote good public relations, and must understand how to properly use and care for the school bus - a complex and expensive piece of equipment.

The intended purpose of this program is to provide each school bus driver with the basic information needed to develop the skills, behaviours, and knowledge that result in safe and efficient driving.

This program has been developed with the cooperation of SD84 Bus Drivers and administration with the sincere hope that each of SD84's school bus drivers will review, study and properly apply the information presented to assure a safer transportation program for our students.

**LEGISLATION**

***Motor Vehicle Act Regulations - B.C. Reg. 26/98 – Division 11 – School Buses***

**11.12 Boarding School Bus**

- (1) The driver of a school bus shall not open, or allow or cause to be opened, the door of the bus and allow any person to board or leave the bus unless
  - (a) the part of the roadway unoccupied by and to the left of the bus is at least 3 m wide and is clear and unobstructed for the full length of the bus, and
  - (b) there is a clear view of the bus for a distance of 60 m in each direction on the highway.
- (2) The driver of a school bus shall not allow any person
  - (a) to board or leave the bus when it is moving,
  - (b) to board or leave the school bus other than on the right side of the bus, or
  - (c) to have access to the baggage compartments, if any, from the left side of the bus while occupying any part of the travelled portion of the highway.
- (3) No person shall
  - (a) board or leave a school bus when it is moving,
  - (b) board or leave a school bus other than on the right side of the school bus, or
  - (c) have access to the baggage compartments, if any, from the left side of the bus while the bus is occupying any part of the travelled portion of the highway.
- (4) The driver of a yellow and black school bus may, but need not, activate
  - (a) the alternately flashing lamps, or
  - (b) the stop arm on the school bus when the bus is stopping or stopped to load or unload passengers.

- (5) The driver of a yellow and black school bus who activates the alternately flashing lamps on the school bus shall do so
  - (a) in sufficient time to give reasonable warning to the drivers of other vehicles who are required to stop, and
  - (b) throughout the entire process of loading or unloading students.
- (6) No person shall operate the alternating flashing lamps or the stop arm on a yellow and black school bus unless the vehicle is stopped or stopping to load or unload students.

**British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act - Railway Crossings**

- 185** (1) When a driver is approaching a railway crossing at a time when
- (a) a clearly visible electrical or mechanical signal device gives warning of the approach of a railway train,
  - (b) a crossing gate is lowered or a flagger is giving a signal of the approach or passage of a railway train, or
  - (c) a railway train is approaching and is within approximately 500 m of a crossing or by reason of its speed or nearness to the crossing is an immediate hazard and emits an audible signal or is visible, the driver must stop the vehicle within 15 m but not less than 5 m from the nearest rail of the railway, and must not cause or permit the vehicle to proceed until he or she can do so safely.
- (2) A person must not drive a vehicle through, around or under a crossing gate or barrier at a railway crossing while the gate or barrier is closed or is being opened or closed.
- (3) If a stop sign is erected at a railway crossing, a driver approaching the railway crossing
- (a) must stop his or her vehicle
    - (i) no closer than 5 m, and
    - (ii) no farther than 15 m from the nearest rail of the railway, and
  - (b) must not proceed until he or she can do so safely.
- (4) Except at a railway spur line or an industrial track in a business or residence district, the driver of.
- (a) a bus carrying passengers for compensation,
  - (b) a school bus carrying a child ..... must ....
  - (e) stop his or her vehicle
    - (i) no closer than 5 m, and
    - (ii) no farther than 15 m from the nearest rail of the railway,
  - (f) remain stopped, must listen and look in both directions along the railway for an approaching train, and for signals indicating the approach of a train, and
  - (g) must not proceed until he or she can do so safely.
- (5) When a driver has stopped in accordance with this section, the driver must
- (a) cross the railway tracks in a gear that he or she will not need to change while crossing the tracks,
  - (b) not shift gears while so crossing, and;
  - (c) not stop with part of the vehicle on or over the tracks.
- (6) Despite this Act, the driver of a vehicle approaching the track of a railway must proceed with caution to avoid a collision between the vehicle and an approaching train.

**RIGHT TO REFUSE/RIGHT TO KNOW**

The law in BC requires you to work safely. You are breaking the law if you do work that you have reason to believe is unsafe for any person – yourself, a fellow worker or a passenger. A worker refusing to do unsafe work is a critical part of preventing injuries or incidents (see District OH&S Manual, Section R, *Refusal of Unsafe Work*).

**WorkSafeBC Regulation 3.12 – Refusal of Unsafe Work - OH&S Regulation:** “A person must not carry out or cause to be carried out any work process or operate or cause to be operated any tool, appliance or

*equipment if that person has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person”*

As a driver, it is your responsibility and obligation to ensure the safety of passengers at all times. This will best be accomplished by always making an accurate risk assessment of not only the road conditions and equipment, but also the passenger load you are carrying and knowing all information about any passenger that may present a threat to other passengers through their behaviour or conduct. You may need to ask the Operations Supervisor or designate to speak with a Principal to get an accurate risk assessment on a student if they appear to present an undue risk to fellow passengers or to you.

### **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

WorkSafeBC Regulation 4.27 states: *“violence” - means the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury”.*

WorkSafeBC Regulation 4.30 states:

- (1) *An employer must inform workers who may be exposed to the risk of violence of the nature and extent of the risk.*
- (2) *The duty to inform workers in subsection (1) includes a duty to provide information related to the risk of violence from persons who have a history of violent behaviour and whom workers are likely to encounter in the course of their work.*
- (3) *The employer must instruct workers who may be exposed to the risk of violence in*
  - (a) *the means for recognition of the potential for violence*
  - (b) *the procedures, policies and work environment arrangements which have been developed to minimize or effectively control the risk to workers from violence*
  - (c) *the appropriate response to incidents of violence, including how to obtain assistance, and*
  - (d) *procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidents of violence.*

Policy and procedures defining and outlining the steps to follow when dealing with violence in the workplace are outlined in District Policy D.13, *Violence in the Workplace*, as well as in the SD84 OH&S Manual, Section V. All bus drivers must review the procedures contained within the Violence in the Workplace Program.

### **Employee Threat/Violence Report**

**OHS Regulation 4.27 Definition:** *The attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that the worker is at risk of injury.*

Please contact your Supervisor immediately if you need to file a report. The report form is found in the OH&S section of the School District’s website, or within the Violence in the Workplace Program in the District OH&S Manual.

### **EMPLOYEES INJURED AT WORK – WORKSAFEBC CLAIMS**

Every injury occurring to our employees (on a work site) **MUST** be treated by the site First Aid Attendant and recorded. This provides a record of the occurrence in the event complications occur at a later date. When an employee is injured at work and the injury results in either or both medical treatment outside the workplace or absence from work, a claim **MUST** be established within three (3) calendar days with WorkSafeBC.

All bus drivers will hold current OFA Level 1 or equivalent certificates. A current list of First Aid Attendants will be provided to the bus driver.

**First Aid Kits** – First Aid kits are maintained by the local OH&S Safety Representative by Preventative Maintenance Work Order. Note: The bus driver must inform the OH&S Rep if supplies have been used enough to merit refilling earlier than at the regular PM intervals.

## **BUS STOPS**

- School bus stops will be established in accordance with Ministry policy, taking into account terrain, roads and population density.
- Elementary students wishing to leave the bus at a stop other than their regular one should have a note from a Principal, parent or guardian.
- When an elementary student wishes to leave the bus at a stop other than their regular one and has no written permission from a parent or guardian, the driver will immediately contact the Principal.

## **BUS ROUTES AND SCHEDULES**

Proposed bus routes and schedules for the new school year will be communicated by the Operations Supervisor or designate prior to school opening in September.

### **Assignment of Routes and Schedules**

Routes are designed to serve eligible riders in a safe and efficient manner. A driver may not alter bus stop locations or times without first notifying and receiving authorization from the Operations Supervisor or designate. Sufficient notice must be given to passengers before the changes are implemented.

## **CALCULATION OF WORKING HOURS AND ASSIGNMENT OF EXTRA WORK**

Hours of work are assigned based on the actual driving time plus time for cleaning and fuelling, pre and post trips. If a driver believes that permanent changes to the working hours assigned to a run are necessary, the driver will make a written request to the Operations Supervisor with a brief explanation of the circumstances pertinent to the request. If a temporary change in hours is necessary (due to road construction, etc.), a verbal request to the Operations Supervisor is sufficient.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **All drivers shall:**

- complete a pre and post-trip inspection each day;
- have full authority over the bus and the riders, and shall determine that only pupils and persons authorized by the Principal board the bus;
- adhere to traffic and safety regulations at all times in the operation of their assigned vehicle;
- adhere closely to the established **current** schedule, which shall be approved by the Operations Supervisor or designate;
- see that all doors on the bus are kept closed while the bus is in motion;
- ensure that aisles are kept clear, and that ice skates or similar sharp objects are sheathed or boxed to eliminate the possibility of injury;
- sweep and clean out the interior of the bus each day; and shall keep the bus well ventilated, and/or heated at all times;
- instruct the students and document at least twice during the school year in the following:
  - use of the emergency door
  - safe operation of the windows
  - evacuation procedures
- receive training and demonstrate proficiency in applying chains to bus wheels when winter driving;
- immediately notify the Operations Supervisor or designate of any changes to stops or routes;
- report to the Operations Supervisor immediately when the bus is overloaded;
- report to the Operations Supervisor any new road hazards as they occur;
- report all student accidents to the Principal;
- report all accidents to the Operations Supervisor or designate as soon as practicable or within 24 hours of the accident, as well as any damage to the bus;
- keep their person clean and neat.

### **All drivers shall not:**

- permit anyone but themselves to operate the bus, except with the permission of the Operations Supervisor or designate;

- use a school bus for any purpose other than transporting students to and from school, except on special order of the Operations Supervisor or designate;
- deviate from the route as laid out without verbal approval from the Operations Supervisor or designate;
- fuel the vehicle while students are in the bus, or while the motor is running;
- leave the bus when students are in it until he/she has shut off the motor, removed the keys, set the brakes and put the bus in gear;
- in the case of an accident, make any statement that may reflect liability for the accident, on himself or another party.
- engage in unnecessary conversation with anyone while the bus is in motion.

### **Mandatory Paperwork**

- Pre-trip sheet when reporting defects
- Timesheet for payroll, to be submitted to the Operations Supervisor or designate on the Wednesday bi-weekly cutoff date. Note: Late time sheets may result in no pay until the next pay period.
- Daily Pre-trip & Hours Log Book
- Daily Mileage Sheet

### **Recommendations for Getting the Job Done**

1. Be a Good Role Model.
2. Communicate with Students:
  - Greet students as they board bus
  - Support/demonstrate a culture of caring
  - Introduce yourself to new students

#### Consider the Impression You Make:

- Check your appearance. Keep the respect of students by wearing clothes that are in style, neat and clean. Be well groomed at all times.
- Guard your health, not only so that you can feel fit enough to accomplish what has to be done, but also so that you can do it all and maintain your good nature.
- Keep your voice low and pleasing to avoid irritating the students and wearing them out. Spare yourself too. Speak quietly so that they will do the same.
- Relax so that your manner will not indicate tension.

1. Be Prepared and Have a Routine

Routine gives youngsters security and establishes a precedent. Routine minimizes arguments which contribute to poor control situations.

2. Be Firm and Consistent

Step in with a firm decision when the situation calls for one. If a specific behaviour is considered unacceptable one time, it must be unacceptable every time. Do not let it depend on your mood.

3. Be Impartial – Be Fair

Treat all students alike – EVERY TIME. Sometimes the first student to run afoul is one of the mildest and best students on the bus. The rules and disciplinary procedures apply to him/her too.

4. Look for Potential Trouble

Have a wide range of attention and see everything but do not look too hard at the insignificant.

5. Do Not Argue

If you are enforcing a rule, there is no place for argument. Do not be drawn into an argument! Discuss, don't challenge the student. Show cause and subsequent effect but do not try to defend the District's policy or rule that you are enforcing.

6. Do Not Ridicule or Label Children

Sarcasm is not necessary or desired. Commendation does more to help in obtaining good standards of conduct than condemnation.

7. Do Not Punish the Group

Don't punish the entire group for the misbehaviour of one.

8. All forms of sexual contact or harassment are inappropriate and are contrary to the law.

To summarize:

- THINK before you speak
- PROVIDE REASON
- Be HONEST
- Be FAIR
- Be FIRM
- Be FRIENDLY
- COMMEND good qualities
- HAVE a sense of HUMOUR
- NEVER strike a student
- OVERLOOK some things
- Set a GOOD EXAMPLE
- Never RIDICULE
- GIVE SIMPLE DIRECTIONS rather than creating confrontation

**DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

**School Code of Conduct**

Every school has a Code of Conduct that is available to all drivers (District Policy E.33, *Student Conduct*). District Policy C.2, *Conduct on School Buses (Student)* is another policy pertaining to students' conduct. District policies can be accessed on the District website under "Policies".

**Student Management and Bus Discipline Reports**

A school bus driver's job is one of great responsibility – the lives of students are literally in your hands. That is why it is so important to maintain order on your bus.

Remind students that it is a privilege to ride the bus. Notify the Principal and Operations Supervisor or designate of any students who seriously or continually disrupt the normal or safe operation of the bus. The Principal will notify a parent or guardian of the loss of bus privileges after reasonable efforts have been made to have the student correct inappropriate behaviour.

Should the bus trip be to a destination outside the local community, the bus driver can interrupt the bus trip to require a parent or guardian to meet the bus and remove the student from the bus. This will happen when the student has become seriously disruptive to the safe control of the bus.

**Withdrawal of Bus Privileges**

When a student repeatedly misbehaves, or performs acts considered injurious to self, others or property or performs acts considered by the driver to endanger the safe operation of the school bus, then his/her transportation privileges may be revoked until such time as satisfactory conduct is pledged.

**General Discipline Guidelines**

- Principals have the final responsibility for behaviour of all students transported on school buses.
- Bus drivers have full authority to maintain order on the bus, but shall report all cases requiring disciplinary action to the Principal.
- Parents shall be advised by the Principal of all cases of misbehaviour reported to him/her by the bus driver.



- Principals have the authority to suspend the right to ride on buses for repeated misbehaviour. This shall be for a stated period of time.
- Any suspension shall be reported to the parents and to the Operations Supervisor.
- Privilege of transportation shall be restored to students suspended only upon assurance to the Principal of conforming to bus regulations.
- Assigned seating for students may be used and/or assigning a chaperone, if required.
- Suspensions of 10 or more days may only be sanctioned by the Superintendent of Schools/Secretary-Treasurer, upon written request by the Principal.
- Students will be held responsible for willful damage to the school bus under District Policy No. E.6, *Damage or Theft by Students or Others of Minority Age*.
- Singularly inexcusable conduct, i.e. threatening or assaulting driver, shall result in an immediate and indefinite period of suspension from bus privileges as per District Policy No. C.2, *Conduct on School Buses (Student)*.
- Rules and regulations concerning safety and deportment:
  - are signed off as agreed upon when parents request registration;
  - are a compliance requirement for the privilege of riding the bus.

### **Disciplinary Action**

The discipline of a student while attending an educational program made available by a board or a Provincial school must be similar to that of a kind, firm and judicious parent, but **MUST NOT** include corporal punishment. By definition, corporal punishment is a punishment for some violation of conduct which involves the infliction of pain on, or harm to the body.

### **Managing Problems on the Bus**

- It is preferable to contact the School Principal, if possible.
- Stop the bus. Park in a safe location off the road, perhaps a parking lot or a driveway.
- Secure the bus. Take the ignition key with you if you leave your seat.
- Stand up and speak to the offender or offenders. Speak in a courteous manner with a firm voice. Remind the offender of the behaviour expected. Don't show anger but do show that you mean business.
- If a change of seating is needed, move the student to a seat near you.
- NEVER put a student off the bus except at school or at his or her residence/school bus stop. If you feel that the offense is serious enough that you cannot safely drive the bus, call for assistance from the Operations Supervisor or Principal to resolve the problem.
- Follow the District's procedures for further discipline or refusal of rights to ride the bus.
- Assuming physical contact other than with intent to cause pain for purposes of punishment may be considered appropriate, such contact might well be necessary:
  - to stop an act of violence;
  - to remove from a student a suspicious or dangerous weapon;
  - to prevent an act which might result in injury to self or others;
  - to perform first aid;
  - to restrain a special needs student for safety purposes; or,
  - to deliver a welcomed gesture of caring or congratulations such as a high five, a shoulder pat or a handshake.

### **Start the First Day Right**

Insist on the practice of good manners. Explain carefully the standards wanted and expected. However, ensure the standards are within reach, that there are not too many of them, and that they are understood by all the students.

### **VANDALISM - STUDENTS AND OTHERS**

- When vandalism occurs and is reported by students to the bus driver, the bus driver will inform the Operations Supervisor or designate, and the Principal.
- When vandalism occurs and is not reported but rather is discovered by the bus driver
- when cleaning the bus, the bus driver will inform the Operations Supervisor or designate in a timely manner.

- In a case where a vandal is identified, the Principal will be responsible for discipline and recovery costs.

## **INSPECTIONS – PRE AND POST**

### **Pre-Trip Inspection and Trip Inspection Forms**

A driver making his first trip of the day with a bus will:

- complete a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle;
- complete a SD84 Inspection Form.

### **Post-Trip Inspection**

A driver's responsibilities are not over until the vehicle has been properly shut off, checked, and any faults recorded on the daily report sheet. After completion of a trip there are a few tasks which must be attended to that will ensure that the bus will be ready for service the next morning.

- Ensure that the bus has enough fuel for the next trip
- Park the bus, set the brake and shift the transmission to neutral. Allow the engine to idle for a minute or two to ensure proper lubrication of all engine parts.
- While the engine is idling, check the interior for mislaid books, clothing, etc., and store them to be returned to their owners on the next trip. ENSURE THAT NO STUDENTS ARE LEFT ON BOARD.
- Turn off all electrical switches. This will reduce battery load when starting the bus the next time.
- Shut off the engine
- Secure the bus. Turn off the two-way radio, make sure all the windows are closed.
- Report any malfunctions or questionable performance.
- Fill out the appropriate forms.

## **DRIVING THE BUS**

### **Enroute**

- Driver seat belts are to be worn at all times.
- The driver is in full charge at all times.
- A driver is not permitted to smoke while operating a school bus nor on school grounds.
- No persons, other than bus students and SD84 approved riders, shall be allowed to ride on a school bus without the written consent of the Principal or Operations Supervisor.
- Drivers are not to pick up or discharge students at any locations other than designated bus stops.
- Do not back up in school areas except with the assistance of a responsible adult spotter.
- Whenever possible, choose a parking spot that will allow you to drive away without backing up. Do not communicate through the radio for instructions when backing a school bus up.

### **Student Loading and Unloading**

- Make sure master switch for loading lights is in the on position. Always test how the lights work on each bus you drive as there are variations in when they activate.
- The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone or two-way radio while loading or unloading passengers.
- Turn on yellows as you slowly approach stop – allow any traffic in vicinity to pass.
- Complete stop.
- Apply park brake-with bus in neutral.
- Scan around bus to check for any hazards.
- Open door- this will automatically engage red lights and stop sign.
- Continually check for hazards and keep visual contact of students. Be prepared to stop passengers from leaving the bus or crossing the road - sound horn should a dangerous situation arise.
- The driver of a school bus shall instruct all passengers exiting the bus of the proper procedures of crossing the roadway in front of the bus only.
- The driver of a school bus shall ensure that the red flasher lights on the bus remain illuminated and flashing until all passengers have boarded or have exited the bus and have safely crossed the roadway and are safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

- With students safely on or off the bus close doors-this will automatically cancel red lights and stop sign.
- Allow students to be seated.
- Release park brake – bus in gear.
- Proceed slowly from the stop.

### **Use of Cell Phone While Driving**

Cell phone use while driving is strictly prohibited and against the law in BC. Cell phone calls are only allowed after safely parking and engaging the park brake.

### **BALTIMORE SYSTEM** *(used only with approval of the Operations Supervisor)*

This District uses the Baltimore System for loading and unloading school buses. This system is judged to provide the highest guarantee of safety for students while at their bus stops and while boarding or leaving their buses. This system works as follows:

1. Wherever possible, bus stops are located in areas where the school bus can pull completely off the road onto the shoulder to pick up or discharge students. In this case, red flashing lights are not used.
2. Where it is not possible for the procedure in (1) above to be followed, the bus will stop on the roadway, using red flashing lights to stop all traffic.

**For discharge:** Students are to discharge from the bus and wait for the bus to leave the stop. If the students are required to cross the roadway, they must wait for all traffic to be cleared before doing so. *Please note that when flashing lights are used, their purpose is to stop traffic—not to assist children in crossing the road.* It is the view of the Board of Education and the local RCMP that if children are taught to cross roadways safely to and from bus stops, they will be better able to do so safely at all times.

### **Backing the Bus**

- Back your bus **ONLY** when you have **NO** other safe way to move the vehicle. Backing is dangerous and increases your risk of a collision.
- **If you have no choice and you must back your bus, follow these procedures:**
  - Post a lookout (not to be a student) behind the bus in a safe location in driver's view.
  - The purpose of the lookout is to warn you about obstacles, approaching persons and other vehicles. The lookout should not give directions on how to back the bus. Choose the lookout carefully. You want a mature and reliable person who can be heard clearly – not a student.
  - Signal for quiet on the bus so you can hear the lookout.
  - Sound horn three times before backing and then sound horn again for every bus length moved.
  - As you back, constantly check all mirrors and rear windows.
  - Back slowly and smoothly.
- **If no lookout is available:**
  - Set the parking brake.
  - Turn off the motor and take the keys with you.
  - Walk to the rear of the bus to determine whether the way is clear.
- **If you must back at a student pick-up point:**
  - Pick up students **BEFORE** backing.
  - Watch for latecomers at all times.
- **If you must back at a student drop-off point:**
  - Unload students **AFTER** backing.

## **Two-Way Radio Procedures**

- Two-way radios are designed to transmit between a base station and a mobile unit. Any contact between two mobile units is of benefit but cannot always be expected. Radio signals travel as "line of sight".
- Make sure radio squelch is properly adjusted. This is the most important factor in good radio reception.
- When making a call to base, identify yourself, first by name and then by route number.
- It is illegal to use profane language on radios.
- If you have an emergency when you call the base, state that you have an EMERGENCY. This will alert the base of the concern and it will not be mistaken for a routine transmission.
- When giving a message, speak CLEARLY and SLOWLY in order to allow the base operator to write down the message.

## **Alternate Bus Routing Due to Weather Conditions**

Inclement weather bus routes may be altered if the effects of the weather are sufficient enough to prevent our buses from travelling safely to and from their destinations. The BUS DRIVER is ultimately responsible for making this decision. Alternate pick-up points will be designated for students normally being picked up in the areas affected. The bus driver, if unable to deliver a student to the regular stop, shall:

- call the Operations Supervisor or designate on the radio to discuss the situation
- return the students to the school, or
- keep the students on the bus until the parent or another adult assumes responsibility
- in the event of a problem in reaching a regular stop, contact the School Office.

## **Hazard Lights**

*With the exception of railway crossings* hazards are not to be used. Do not use when parked at the side of the road for non emergency situations. Do not use when a scheduled bus stop requires pulling off the road and regular loading lights are not in use.

## **CLEANING BUSES**

The driver must ensure that:

- the floor of your school bus is washed with a disinfectant solution at least once a week.
- all lights, flashers and fixed signs are clean at all times.
- the interior of the bus is disinfected twice a month.
- the exterior of the bus will be washed at least once a month.
- windshields, lights, mirrors clear at all times.

## **PROTOCOL FOR CONCERNS**

### **Concern Protocol**

- Student Behaviour - report to Principal and/or Operations Supervisor or designate;
- Parent - report to Principal and/or Operations Supervisor or designate;
- General Public - report to Operations Supervisor or designate;
- School Staff - report to Principal and/or Operations Supervisor or designate.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

If the bus driver has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, and that the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child, he/she must report the suspected abuse or neglect to a child welfare worker at the Ministry for Children and Family Development at 250-286-7542 or to USMA Nuu-chah-nulth at 250-724-3232 or toll free at 1-877-722-3232. If in doubt, contact the MCFD Office.

### **District Policy E.5, *Child Abuse***

1. An employee must report when there is reason to believe that:
  - a child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a parent or another person and the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child;
  - the child has been or is likely to be physically harmed because of neglect by the child's parent;
  - the child is emotionally harmed by the parent's conduct;
  - the child is deprived of necessary health care;
  - the child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment;
  - the child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provisions for the child's care;
  - the child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's safety or well-being;
  - the child's parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care; or,
  - the child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care.
2. Employees who have reasonable grounds to believe a child is in need of protection shall also report the circumstances to the Principal.
3. Employees must not interview the child; rather, they must only report information that has been learned from a spontaneous disclosure by the child and other information available in school files.
4. On request, principals shall allow the investigating social worker and police officer to interview the child in the school. The presence of an educator during child protection interviews is not required, but may be requested to support the child.
5. In a case of suspected abuse or neglect by a District employee, the Superintendent of Schools/ Secretary-Treasurer shall conduct an investigation in cooperation with the local child welfare worker and the RCMP.
6. It is expected that all employees will provide relevant information to the investigating social worker, police officer and, where appropriate, the Superintendent of Schools/Secretary-Treasurer; however, all information obtained by the employees about child abuse and neglect case (oral or written) is confidential and shall be disclosed only as described above and shall not be placed in the child's cumulative file or school record.

## Guidelines for School Personnel: Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The legal duty to report is the responsibility of each individual. Any person, including school employees, with reason to believe that a child needs protection has a duty to report directly to a child protection social worker.</li> <li>Informing another person e.g. a colleague or a supervisor does not discharge the legal duty to report directly to a child protection social worker.</li> <li>Reports must be made immediately. Failure to report is a serious offence under the law.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>Scenario 2</b>	<b>Scenario 3</b>	<b>Scenario 4</b>
	Alleged Child Abuse/Neglect by a Parent, Caregiver, Family, Friend or Stranger	Alleged Child Abuse/Neglect by a School Employee, Contracted Service Provider or Volunteer	Alleged Abusive Behaviour at School by a Student Under Age 12	Alleged Abusive Behaviour at School by a Student 12 years of Age and Over (Including a Young Offender)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report allegations to a child protection social worker</li> <li>Call police if student is in immediate danger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report allegations to a child protection social worker</li> <li>Call police if student is in immediate danger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify the school principal</li> <li>Call police if student is in immediate danger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify the school principal</li> <li>Call police if student is in immediate danger</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify the principal that a report was made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify principal, supervisor and/or Superintendent of Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School assesses whether or not there is a reason to believe a student is in need of protection</li> <li>Notify the child protection social worker if there is reason to believe a child is in need of protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School assesses whether or not there is a reason to believe a student is in need of protection</li> <li>Notify the child protection social worker if there is reason to believe a child is in need of protection</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School personnel DO NOT contact parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School personnel DO NOT contact parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School personnel DO NOT contact parents if a report was made to a child protection social worker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School personnel DO NOT contact parents if a report was made to a child protection social worker</li> <li>In the case of an alleged criminal offence or breach of probation, administration should contact the police</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with child protection social worker/police during investigation</li> <li>Provide information requested by child protection social worker/police</li> <li>Child protection social worker MUST report back to you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superintendent, child protection social worker and police collaborate on initial response and parental contact</li> <li>Coordinated investigations are conducted</li> <li>Provide information requested by child protection social worker, police or Superintendent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with child protection social worker or police during investigation</li> <li>Provide information requested by child protection social worker, police and/or principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with child protection social worker or police during investigation</li> <li>Provide information requested by child protection social worker, police and/or principal</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to the student and follow-up response as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to the student and follow-up response as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to the student and follow-up response as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to the student and follow-up response as needed</li> </ul>

### ANTI-IDLING

As idling a diesel engine during the winter has negligible impact on the ability to warm itself up, the only time drivers should be idling school bus engines would be during the pre-trip time for charging the brake system.

## **HOW CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF SAFE?**

### **Bloodborne Pathogens**

District Policy B.13, *Bloodborne Pathogens*, states:

1. Students diagnosed with serious infectious illnesses continue to have the right to an educational program and to receive the program in the least restrictive environment possible.
2. Infected employees have the right to continue their employment as long as they are able to fulfill duties without risk to themselves or others.
3. Since serious infectious illness is primarily a medical problem, the guidance of the Medical Health Officer should be sought when planning an education program for an infected student or when determining whether it is safe (for self and others) for an infected employee to continue in his or her current duties.
4. Infected students and employees, as with any other illness, should be provided the maximum degree of confidentiality that is compatible with the safety of other persons.
5. Specific procedures as outlined in the District's Health and Safety Program (Biohazardous Control Program) shall be communicated to all employees concerning practices to prevent harmful contact with all blood, body fluids, secretions, and excretions.

### **Universal Precautions**

The bus driver is required to follow SD84's Universal Precautions as outlined in the Biohazardous Control Program found in the District OH&S Manual:

*Wear personal protective equipment (ie. GLOVES) whenever there is a risk of exposure to another person's body fluids, wash hands, pick up sharps, handle garbage safely, and follow the correct procedure for clean-up of spills of blood and certain body fluids, clean and disinfect contaminated areas. NOTE: Blood and body fluid contact with INTACT SKIN IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A RISK.*

### **Hand Washing**

Hand washing is one of the best defences against spreading infections. Wash your hands often during your work day and if hand-washing facilities are not available, use a waterless hand cleanser. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water in a proper facility as soon as possible after using the cleanser.

Wash your hands when you tear a glove or if you think a glove is leaking, or after you remove gloves at the end of your task. Wash your hands immediately after accidental contact of unprotected but intact skin with blood or certain body fluids. Wash your hands before eating, drinking, smoking, biting your nails, handling contact lenses, and applying personal care products such as lip balm or makeup.

### **Handling Garbage Safely**

Wear gloves! Do not pick up sharps or other items (for example, condoms) unless you have the proper equipment and gloves, and you have been instructed how to do so safely. Do not pick up anything with the intention of discarding it later. For example, do not put a used needle in your pocket that is not in a proper pocket container. You could injure yourself before you discard it. Do not place needles in regular garbage under any circumstances – you may create a hazard for others. Be sure that you have a supply of disposable gloves at all times. (See OH&S "Biohazardous Controls Program" for Safe Work Procedures.)

### **Vaccinations**

Flu and Hepatitis B vaccines are available to employees at no cost. Information with regard to reimbursement of costs is available on the District website and the bulletin boards at the schools and the School Board Office.

## Lifting/Transferring Students and/or Heavy Loads

To properly protect your back when you move students or equipment, remember the following important principles:

- **Plan ahead:** first, think through exactly how you want to do the lift
- **Keep the load close:** ensure that the load is kept as close to your centre of gravity as possible
- **Never twist:** the back is not designed to take loads when twisting
- **Use your legs:** your legs are designed to take loads so use them rather than your back!
- **Never lift higher than your chest height:** Lifting too high will make your back arch backwards into a very vulnerable position
- **Check your posture:**
  - **Feet:** place them wide apart for good solid base support
  - **Knees:** ensure knees are bent so you will use your thigh muscles
  - **Back:** tighten your abdominal and buttock muscles to flatten your lumbar curve and strengthen your back for lifting
  - **Head and Shoulders:** keep them tight
  - **Abdomen:** keep stomach muscles tight to take pressure off your back
- **Get help if the load is too heavy!** Do not lift more than you are physically capable of lifting safely.

## Head Lice

In accordance with District Policy E.46, *Treatment of Head Lice*, the Board respects the practices recommended by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, which is based on the current research indicating that head lice is not a health hazard. The bus driver is required to inform the Principal of students who appear to be infected.

## H1N1 (Swine Flu)

SD84 has a link on its website to Updates and Resources for H1N1. There is also currently a Provincial Website with additional information <http://www.gov.bc.ca/swineflu>.

## Working Alone

Bus drivers are required to check in as per the checking system established in accordance with the Working Alone Program which is included in District Policy B.12, Health and Safety, and the District OH&S Manual. Bus drivers are to contact the Operations Supervisor or designate to confirm that the following checking procedures are followed:

### Gold River Worksite Bus Driver –

- Check in when back in yard or relay radio message via WFP to the School Board Office in the event of emergency.

### Zeballos School Bus Driver –

- Radio contact with School Office.

### Bus Driver on Out-of-District Route or Travelling Between Fair Harbour, Zeballos, Tahsis and/or Gold River:

- Cell phone and/or satellite phone. If a field trip, procedures must be put in place prior to departure to ensure that there is contact with the Principal and/or designate or the School Board Office in the case of emergencies.

## Safety Reps and Committees

Each worksite in School District 84 has a designated OH&S Safety Representative and/or an OH&S Committee. If you have any questions or concerns with regard to health and safety issues, please contact the Operations Supervisor and/or the Worksite OH&S Rep and/or Committee at your earliest possible opportunity



## **School Bus Rules**

- Students must obey directions from the bus driver as the driver is in charge at all times. All cases of misbehaviour on school buses shall be reported by the driver to the Principal or designate, who will contact parents. Continued misbehaviour may result in the student's loss of the rights to ride on school buses.
- Any wilful damage to a bus must be reported to the Principal or designate, and the Operations Supervisor, and may be paid for by the student or their parent/guardian.
- NO SMOKING, EATING OR DRINKING, NO EXCESSIVE NOISE OR OBSCENE, LANGUAGE, NO ALCOHOL OR ILLEGAL DRUGS are permitted on the bus.
- Students must not bring items that could cause harm. Examples include alcohol, animals, bikes, drugs, explosive items, glass, hockey sticks, laser pointers, lighters, matches, scooters, skateboards, skates without safety bags, skis, ski poles, strong-smelling sprays or liquids, tobacco products, and weapons (real or fake).
- Students are to remain seated while bus is in motion.
- Aisles of the bus must be kept clear at all times. Books, personal belongings, sports and musical equipment must be held on the student's lap. Soft drink bottles or glass of any kind must not be taken on the bus. Students' belongings cannot be carried on the engine cover or behind the driver's seat.
- Students must not throw waste or other rubbish on the floor or out of bus windows.
- Students must not at any time extend arm(s) or head out of bus windows.
- Students may be assigned a seat in which they must be seated at all times.
- Students should be at the bus stop five (5) minutes ahead of posted schedule; the bus will not wait for those who are late.
- Students must remain in the area designated as bus loading zone and not on the road while waiting for a bus.
- All students will load and unload bus in an orderly manner.
- At stops, students getting off must cross in front of the bus with the use of alternating lights, at driver's discretion.
- Damage to the bus or equipment must be reported at once to the driver.
- No student will be allowed to sit in the driver's seat or on the engine hood at any time.
- Students must not have anything in their possession that may cause injury to another student.
- Students must not bully or intimidate other students.
- Conduct must be orderly at all times. Shoving or pushing will not be tolerated.
- There is to be no moving around on the buses. Students must remain in their seats until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Students are to refrain from throwing articles. Snowballs must not be thrown in bus stop areas. Paper or other articles are not to be thrown from bus windows.
- Students are to refrain from talking to the bus driver while the bus is in motion.
- While talking among students is permitted, there is to be no undue noise.
- On extra-curricular trips, students must be accompanied by a coach or sponsor. All of the above rules apply to these trips.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **Emergency Exit**

- The emergency exit door shall be used only in case of an accident or when the entrance door cannot be used. However, the emergency exit door may be used for the purpose of conducting drills.
- The emergency exit door shall be inspected daily to determine that it is properly latched and that it can be opened in case of an emergency.
- The warning signal on the emergency exit door shall be inspected daily to determine if it is functioning properly.
- Under no circumstance shall the emergency door be wired or fastened in such a way as to prevent its opening in case of an emergency.
- Area in front of exit doors must be kept clear at all times.

## Fire on Board Bus – Actions Steps

### 1. Secure Bus:

- Unload students either through the front or rear door or in the event of both doors being incapacitated the use of the emergency windows
- Before leaving the bus make a final check for any passengers left on board. If the bus is smoke-filled, crawl on the floor.
- Put somebody in charge in the event that the bus driver is hurt or unable to help.
- Direct passengers to a safe location at least 35 metres (115 feet) away from the bus.

### 2. Unsafe Position:

In the event that a bus is stopped due to a collision, mechanical failure, road conditions or human failure, you must determine immediately whether it is safe for passengers to remain in the bus or to evacuate. You must evacuate if:

- The stopping position of the bus may change and increase the danger. If, for example, a bus should come to rest near a body of water or precipice where it could still move and go into the water or over a cliff, it should be evacuated. You should be certain that the evacuation is carried out in a manner which affords maximum safety for the children.
- The stopping of the bus is such that there is danger of collision. In normal traffic conditions the bus should be visible for a distance of 300 metres (990 feet) or more.
- A position over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist should be considered a reason for evacuation.
- Special emphasis should be placed on evacuation through the back door. It is very important to have somebody helping the students off the bus or there could be a problem with sprained or broken ankles or in the event of elementary children – just being scared to jump down.

## Approaching Bus Stops Under Slippery Conditions

The students should be told of the hazards of an approaching bus under abnormal circumstances; eg. the crown of the road being sloped too much and upon final braking the bus slides over sometimes a foot or more, the sudden grabbing of a brake pulling the bus towards the waiting students.

- Have students well away from the roadway if possible.
- Do not approach bus until it has come to a safe and complete stop.
- Slowly and carefully board bus making students aware that snow and ice builds up on stairways making them very hazardous.

## Breakdown Procedures

Despite a good preventative maintenance program, your bus may occasionally have a mechanical failure. Although the breakdown may appear relatively harmless at first, the safety of your passengers could be at risk. Knowing how to handle an emergency situation created by mechanical failure quickly and effectively is an important part of the bus driver's job.

- Stop the bus as far to the right of the road as possible, or on the road's shoulder.
- Secure the bus, activate four-way hazard lights, engage the parking brake
- Keep students on the bus unless it is unsafe to do so
- Place reflectors in accordance with provincial laws
- Radio the base for assistance, giving location of the bus and a description of the breakdown. Another bus will be dispatched as soon as possible.
- If radio contact is not possible, write down the information and have a passing motorist call in to the office.

## Accident Procedures

- KEEP CALM & NOTIFY THE OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR OR DESIGNATE IMMEDIATELY.
- Make no admissions or take any blame for the incident
- Determine whether the bus is in a safe area
- Protect the area with emergency warning devices (reflectors)
- Direct students to stay on the bus, or if not safe have students disembark and move to a safe area. Ensure a full rider manifest is completed before any students disembark. Students should be instructed not to walk home – keep them all together.
- Offer assistance to the injured.
- Notify the Operations Supervisor or designate as soon as possible where any person is hurt or visible damage to equipment is evident.
- Take pictures, if able.
- Do not move the bus until the Operations Supervisor or designate has instructed you to do so.
- If other vehicles are involved, the driver must exchange with the other driver(s) the following information:
  - Name
  - Driver's Licence Number
  - Address and Insurance Company
  - Plate number of any other vehicle involved
  - Inform ICBC and obtain claim number
- Arrange for towing if needed.

Remember, in an emergency .....

1. Assess the Scene
2. Protect the Scene and those Involved
3. Send for Help
4. Notify Appropriate Authorities
5. Transport Uninjured Passengers as Instructed

## Disabled Buses

Any vehicle presents a hazard when it is parked on the side of a road. Because of their size, large vehicles present more significant hazards. In most instances, drivers are required to put out approved warning devices when they park their commercial vehicles at the side of the road in an area not designated for parking.

When parked in the dark, school buses must have a minimum of two warning devices. During daylight hours use four way flashers and reflectors as needed.

If your bus becomes disabled:

- move it as far off the travelled portion of the highway as possible
- place warning devices approximately 30 metres ahead and 30 metres behind the disabled vehicle

Note: It is a good safety practice to place additional warning devices further than 30 metres from your vehicle.

## Emergency Phone Number List

See Table of Contents at the front of this document.

## School Lockdown

All SD84 schools have a lockdown procedure to protect students from outside dangers. This typically involves the physical locking of all exterior doors and the covering of windows in rooms with students and/or teachers.

In the unlikely event that you are in a school at the time of the announcement on the Public Address System of "LOCKDOWN ALL ROOMS NOW", as a staff member, you are expected to move to the nearest room where the doors can be locked and away from the windows. Follow the Principal's directions as they

occur. (Leaving the school may inadvertently provide access to an undesirable person when you open the door.)

If the lockdown occurs at bus drop off time, pull the bus over at a safe location at least 3 blocks from the school and ask for advice and assistance over the radio. If the lockdown occurs near to bus pick up time for that school, please keep the bus at least 3 blocks from that school and ask for advice and assistance over the radio.

After a lockdown in rare instances, buses may be needed to shuttle students to another school.

### **Anaphylaxis – Use of Epi-Pen Auto-Injectors**

There may be the time when a student requires assistance during an emergency allergic reaction when a driver needs to know how to use the student's EpiPen auto injector. If you have a student that carries an EpiPen, you will be notified by the Operations Supervisor or designate, and you will be trained on how to use an EpiPen. In the event that that an auto injector must be used, the bus must first be secured in a safe location.

### **Fire Extinguishers**

The bus driver will be trained on how to use the fire extinguisher. In the event of fire, when all students are evacuated and safe, the driver MAY consider the use of the fire extinguisher to extinguish small fires, if there is no imminent danger to the driver.

Remember P A S S ....

**Pull the pin** at the top of the extinguisher. The pin releases a locking mechanism and will allow you to discharge the extinguisher.

**Aim at the base of the fire**, not the flames. This is important - in order to put out the fire, you must extinguish the fuel.

**Squeeze the lever slowly**. This will release the extinguishing agent in the extinguisher. If the handle is released, the discharge will stop.

**Sweep from side to side**. Using a sweeping motion, move the fire extinguisher back and forth until the fire is completely out. Operate the extinguisher from a safe distance, several feet away, and then move towards the fire once it starts to diminish. Be sure to read the instructions on your fire extinguisher - different fire extinguishers recommend operating them from different distances. Remember: Aim at the base of the fire, not at the flames!!!!

### **Emergency Evacuation**

In a school bus accident or emergency situation, the school bus driver must use his/her best judgment to decide what action should be taken. As a school bus driver, your primary responsibility is student safety. In an emergency it may be necessary that the bus be evacuated. This procedure, although not difficult, requires a definite plan followed by periodic practice in emergency evacuation drills.

Fire or Danger of Fire - If any portion of a school bus is on fire, it should be stopped and evacuated immediately. Passengers should move to a point 30 metres or more from the bus and remain there until the bus driver has determined that no danger remains. If a school bus is unable to move or is close to existing fire or highly combustible materials, the "danger of fire" should be assumed and all passengers evacuated.

#### Common Types of School Bus Emergency Evacuation

1. **Evacuations utilizing the front door** should be conducted using the same techniques as a routine unloading. The driver will choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered seat basis.
2. **Evacuations utilizing only the rear exit door** have some distinctive features.
  - The bus driver should walk back through the bus to the rear exit and direct the pre-assigned leader and helpers to take their position.
  - The leader will open the rear emergency door, exit, and stand clear, ready to lead exiting passengers to a safe location set by the driver.
  - The helpers will exit and take their position, one on each side of the rear emergency exit to assist passengers in exiting the bus in a safe and orderly manner.

- Passengers should remain in their seats until directed by the driver to leave the bus. The driver may choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered seat basis.
- The driver should advise all passengers to have their hands free and coats buttoned. Each passenger should be two steps away from the bus before the next person exits. Taller passengers should be reminded to duck their heads in order to exit safely.

### 3. School Bus Evacuation Drills

- All children should be given an opportunity to participate in evacuation drills including those children who ride only on special trips.
- All children should be instructed in school bus passenger safety and procedures for emergency evacuation prior to participation in evacuation drills.
- School bus evacuation drills should be held more often during fall and spring months.
- Drills should be held in restricted off-street areas and not on bus routes.
- All types of emergency evacuations should be practiced with emphasis on utilizing the rear emergency exit.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Use of Restraints – Special Education Students**

- Restraints are to be used when it has been determined that they are necessary for safety and/or medical concerns (eg. seizures, driver/passenger protection, etc.). It is recommended that the restraints be used as follows:
- Restraints are to be used only with consent of the parent/guardian and/or CEA.
- The driver's safety related concerns should be discussed with the student before using a restraint.
- Students who show aggression toward the driver, other students, or who are continuously out of their seat, must be restrained.
- In behavioural related situations, the driver should use a restraint for a short, defined period of time. If unsafe conduct re-occurs, use the restraint for a longer period of time. Always give the student an opportunity to show their behaviour has improved.

### **Lift Operation – Pick-Up and Drop-Off Procedures**

Pick-up and drop-off sites for handicapped students **may** require special alterations from standard operating procedures. All special procedures should be addressed at the time of the IEP meeting and be recorded on the IEP document. It is essential that ambulatory students enter and exit the school bus in an orderly manner. Some students need extensive assistance while other students require little or no assistance.

Some special considerations which direct the amount of assistance required are:

- age of student,
- weight and size of student,
- visual acuity, intellectual factors,
- social/emotional independence, and
- physical ability.

Each ambulatory student should be expected to independently enter or exit the bus. Students who are non-ambulatory or use mobile devices will be discussed in a separate section. Parents, guardians or other adults should be responsible for bringing the handicapped child curb side and meeting the vehicle at the end of the school day.

There should be a written procedure on how to manage a situation when no authorized person is available to receive the student.

Students who are not ambulatory should not be lifted on or off the school bus. Appropriate adaptive and/or assistive equipment should be used. It is essential that at the end of each route (at school or at home) the bus be checked to make sure that young children have not been left on the school bus.

## Seating

- For students who do not function independently on the school bus, seating should be a planned activity and a part of the daily routine. Students with different handicaps require a range of assistance which is often directly related to the severity of the handicapping condition.
- Ambulatory students with physical handicaps may use assistive devices that need to be stored safely.
- Students frequently require special assistance or equipment such as a vest to assure safe transit.
- Medically fragile students using special equipment require appropriate seating as well as secure storing of personal equipment. Visually impaired students may require assistance in locating their seat because of mobility limitations. These students should be able to sit in the same seat daily and be securely seated.
- Moderately, severe and profoundly handicapped students may need help because intellectual limitations preclude them from finding their seat without assistance.
- Seriously emotionally disturbed students would be seated in the same seat with consideration given to their ability to sit alone or with someone.
- Students with seizure disorders often require special seating and light control.
- Appropriate seating is an essential safety factor. There should always be a seating chart on the vehicle for substitute personnel as well as emergency situations.
- For students with the most complex problems, the IEP meeting is an appropriate time to discuss seating as well as required assistive device utilization.

## Special Adaptive and Assistive Equipment

- There are ongoing changes in the types of adaptive and/or assistive devices which may be found on school buses. The driver must always remember that the primary consideration is student safety. The driver should always follow prescribed written procedures for student transport.
- Mobile seating devices vary greatly in structure, size, weight, and durability. It is essential that the most appropriate method of securement known is used and that the student is in a seat which provides total body support.
- Students who have special orthopedic needs require attention on an individual basis. Some conditions require changes in seating while others require positioning changes. School bus drivers should be a part of decision making when unique situations concern safety.
- The use of student seatbelts, vests, or harnesses should always be an IEP committee decision which includes the parent and Student Support Services staff.
- The use of lap-shoulder belt combinations are currently considered one of the best combinations.

## Lifts and Ramps

- The method for loading and unloading individual handicapped students requires careful consideration. The primary concern should always be safety — the student's as well as the driver's and assistant's.
- A power lift is the most appropriate method of loading and unloading. The appropriate protection on the platform is essential to prevent students from falling or tripping.

## Special Equipment Handling

- Students who utilize special equipment are often referred to as medically fragile students. Personnel in addition to the driver are necessary to provide the appropriate service(s) as needed.
- Some medically fragile students use **mechanical ventilation** equipment during their bus trip to and from school. Precautions should be taken to insure that bus drivers are properly trained to assist students with their equipment if necessary or that other appropriate arrangements be made.
- Decisions regarding securement of specially designed equipment should be made by the appropriate personnel and presented to the IEP committee for approval. An emergency evacuation plan should be a part of the student's transport plan.
- All special handling should be recorded on the student's IEP or agreed upon in an addendum which is approved by the IEP committee including the parent.

## Evacuation

- It is essential to have a written plan for emergency evacuations, which pays close attention to the individual needs of students who use assistive devices, wheelchairs, and ventilation.
- Evacuation procedures should be well known and rehearsed by drivers and specialized personnel, as well as substitute drivers. Handicapped students should be familiarized with evacuation procedures on a regularly scheduled basis. **All** students should be a part of the practice procedures unless exempted by authorized medical personnel.
- The manner in which students are seated daily should always give consideration to evacuation procedures. Drivers should plan to evacuate all students using all available exits with and without the use of the power lift.
- It is important that the driver be knowledgeable about evacuation or other alternative procedures if an emergency situation arises. The following is a list of circumstances which would most likely necessitate an emergency evacuation:
  - The bus is on fire, or fire is anticipated, or gasoline is leaking from the bus.
  - The bus is stalled on an operational railroad track.
  - The bus has broken down on a highway in a poor visibility area.
  - The bus is in danger of being flooded (flash flood area).
  - The bus is unstable.
- Whenever the danger is minimal or due to non-emergency conditions, the driver must consider if the conditions warrant an evacuation. The drivers must ask themselves where the safety factor is best, on or off the bus, and how is the evacuation to be performed if a non-emergency condition changes.
- Students who have physical limitations, intellectual limitations, and/or severe behavioural problems must be managed calmly and proficiently in an emergency situation. It can be anticipated that students with special needs may overreact under stress.
- Whether the handicapped student is a passenger on the school bus with their non-handicapped peers or on specialized equipment, they should be instructed to function to their highest capacity.
- All drivers should have a written emergency plan including stop locations, phone locations, and charted (shortest) routes to the fire department and hospitals.

## Special Ed Driving Tips

Your driving patterns have a major impact on passenger comfort. Jerky, bumpy rides can create excruciating pain for many passengers and may jeopardize their safety. Here are some tips to keep in mind.

- Drive as smoothly as possible, particularly when starting and stopping. Avoid unnecessary lane changes.
- Watch those bumps and potholes. Slow down and drive gently over them.
- Ease around corners slowly and smoothly. People who have difficulties with balance are particularly vulnerable to sudden changes to direction and movement.