

Policy Code: 6400 SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Safety is of paramount concern in providing school bus transportation services. The board recognizes that providing safe transportation requires the cooperation of students, parents, volunteers, personnel, and other governmental agencies. The superintendent or designee and all principals shall make reasonable efforts to inform affected individuals or entities about safety issues and monitor compliance with legal requirements and this policy.

The Edenton-Chowan Schools directs the Superintendent to operate a pupil transportation system based upon the General Statutes of North Carolina concerning pupil transportation, [G.S. § 115C-239](#) *et seq.*, and to operate a school bus maintenance program in compliance with state law and state regulations so as to provide the most efficient and economical services possible.

To ride a school bus is a privilege and not a right. Based upon a student's conduct, the privilege may be taken away. The principal is responsible for school bus discipline.

No student shall be allowed to ride a bus to which the student is not assigned without proper authorization from the principal or a designee.

A. A safe and orderly environment is critical whenever transporting students. The Code of Student Conduct and board policies on student behavior apply as provided in policy 4210, Code of Student Conduct. All students will receive training on school bus safety as required by law regardless of whether they regularly ride a school bus to and from school.

B. SAFETY PRACTICES ON SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES

In addition to any rules established by the superintendent or designee for the safe operation of the student transportation services, the board expects school employees to observe the following practices.

1. All school bus drivers must utilize the North Carolina crossing signal to communicate to students when it is safe to cross the street to board the bus and when it is safe to cross the street after exiting the bus.
2. The number of students transported on any school bus, activity bus, commercial bus or contracted vehicle will not exceed the official rated capacity for the specific vehicle being used.
3. All riders must be seated while the vehicle is in motion.
4. No person will be permitted to stand or sit in the aisle or stepwell when the vehicle is in motion.
5. All school bus drivers are expected to use good judgment in determining whether it is safe to operate a school vehicle and to permit students to enter or leave the bus at particular locations.
6. Bus drivers must report immediately any suspected mechanical defects or other unsafe conditions, including road or traffic conditions that affect the safeness of the bus route or bus stops.

C. TRAINING

It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to see that:

1. students and bus drivers receive training as required by law, including training on the use of the North Carolina crossing signal;
2. students taking trips on activity buses or commercial buses receive safety instruction as needed, including, but not limited to, instruction on and

demonstration of emergency exit operation for the vehicle on which they are riding for any specific trip; and

3. records of student training are made as required by the State Board of Education.

D. ANNUAL REVIEW OF BUS ROUTES

Prior to the commencement of each school year, the transportation supervisor shall prepare and submit to the Superintendent or his/her designee for approval a proposed route for each school bus. Adjustments may be made in the proposed routes to accommodate unforeseen situations which occur during the course of the school year.

E. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ROUTING SCHOOL BUSES

1. School buses shall be routed to safely and economically serve students eligible for transportation.

2. Unless road or other conditions make it inadvisable, buses shall be routed so that they pass within one mile of the residence of each pupil who resides more than one and one-half miles from the school to which the student is assigned.

3. A route description including street or road name and stop location shall be available.

4. A safe school walk zone shall be established and school buses shall not stop within the walk zone except for special needs students.

5. School buses may be routed to serve students who reside within one and one-half miles of the school which serves their residence to avoid hazardous walking conditions.

6. To the extent possible, school bus routes and stops shall be established to avoid hazardous road conditions.

7. The school bus shall not deviate from its route for a distance of less than one-half mile for elementary or a mile for secondary students, unless one of the following conditions is met: there are more than 10 students who are unescorted, the students are in grades K-3, or the students are special needs students.

8. School buses should be routed on state-maintained roads, or on city-maintained or private roads if road or other conditions support such a route and upon approval of the director of transportation.

9. Overlapping, backtracking, and unnecessary stops are to be eliminated.

F. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BUS STOPS

1. The transportation supervisor shall designate school bus stops.

2. Bus stops shall be no closer together than .2 miles unless the distance is shortened in the interest of safety.

3. School buses shall come to a complete stop at each bus stop. If no student is in sight, the bus shall proceed onward immediately.

G. TRANSPORTATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Transportation shall be provided from the student's home to and from school for those "children with special needs," as defined by [G.S. § 115C-109](#) where necessary to meet the child's special needs.

1. It is the parent's responsibility to take the student to and from the bus.

2. Where the student is unable to remain alone safely, a parent (guardian) or other responsible adult must be home in the morning and afternoon to present and receive the student.

3. If a parent or responsible adult is not home at the appointed afternoon drop off, the driver will contact the school principal, who will make arrangements for the student's supervision, which may include contacting the Department of Social Services.

H. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Based on availability of funding, the transportation supervisor shall provide routing assistance, vehicles, and maintenance for after school programs.

I. BUS INSPECTIONS

School bus drivers will perform a pre- and post-trip safety inspection. The driver will report any safety concerns or vandalism to the principal and/or designee and to the transportation supervisor.

In case of vandalism, the transportation supervisor will bill the school for damage. The school will investigate the vandalism. Upon identifying the vandals, the school may pursue collection of damages from the parent or guardian.

J. SCHOOL BUS IDLING

The board recognizes that emissions that accumulate from school buses can be harmful to students and bus drivers. The board further recognizes that unnecessary bus idling wastes fuel and financial resources. The board is committed to transporting students on school buses in a manner that is safe and consistent with the board's goal of resource conservation. To this end, the board prohibits all unnecessary school bus idling on school grounds. In addition, the board prohibits the warming up of buses for longer than 5 minutes, except in extraordinary circumstances or circumstances beyond the bus driver's control.

K. ACCIDENT REPORTING

The driver of any school bus or other school vehicle must report immediately to the superintendent or designee any accident involving death, injury or property. This policy applies to school buses and activity buses when used to transport students to/from school, extracurricular activities, field trips and other school-related activities.

The superintendent shall develop procedures consistent with this policy. The superintendent shall ensure that school bus drivers and appropriate school personnel receive training to implement this policy.

LEGAL REF: [G.S. 20-218](#); [115C-239 to 262](#); [G.S. 115C-36](#); [16 N.C.A.C.6B.0111](#); State Board of Education Policy [EXCP-000](#), [TRAN-000](#), [TRAN-005](#), [TRAN-006](#), [TRAN-011](#); N.C. Public School Allotment Policy Manual, State Allotment Formulas - Transportation of Student, Program Report Code 056 (as modified October 6, 2005); *N.C. School Bus Handbook*, Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, available at <http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/driver/schoolbus/>; *Preventive Maintenance and Vehicle Replacement Manual (NC Bus Fleet Manual)*

CROSS REFERENCE: Code of Student Conduct (Policy 4210); Selection and Employment of School Bus Drivers (Policy 5415); Duties and Responsibilities of School Bus Drivers (Policy 6420); School Bus Passengers (Policy 6430)

ADOPTED: February 7, 2005

AMENDED: January 9, 2009; March 10, 2014; December 1, 2015; August 1, 2017;
August 3, 2021

Edenton-Chowan Schools