

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

I. PURPOSE

To ensure that a safe and cost-effective student transportation system is made available for eligible Shelby County Schools (SCS) students to and from schools.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all eligible SCS students, all SCS employees administering and/or coordinating student transportation services, and vendors contracted by the District to provide school bus transportation services.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

SCS is authorized to provide school bus transportation services (hereafter referred to as transportation services) to and from school at no cost for eligible students. The provision of such services, although not required for students other than those receiving special education services as determined by a child's individualized education program (IEP), is provided as a service to the general student population.

A. Safety

The District believes that the safety of students is the primary consideration in all matters pertaining to student transportation services; and that vehicles used to transport students, its maintenance, and drivers are critical factors that must be considered. To provide safe and reliable transportation services, the District shall comply with and observe all applicable codes, laws, and ordinances of the city of Memphis, Shelby County, State of Tennessee, US government and all other uniform standards established for the protection and safety of individuals being transported.

1. Transportation Supervisor

A Transportation Supervisor shall be appointed by the Superintendent to monitor and oversee District transportation services. Training in student transportation management shall be completed by the Transportation Supervisor and reported to the state department of education in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

2. School Bus

Any entity contracted to provide transportation services in accordance with this policy is expected to maintain all school buses and related equipment in a safe, clean, and operable condition; and to ensure that such services meet or exceed the Tennessee Minimum School Bus Standards as approved by the State Board of Education and all applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.

3. School Bus Driver

As required by law, school bus drivers must pass background checks, have a certified driving record, and maintain all licensures and qualifications. Any entity contracted to provide District transportation services in accordance with this policy shall be responsible for ensuring that each bus driver adheres to all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

B. Complaint Process and Investigation

1. Submitting Complaints

To assist the District in the safe transport of students, individuals (including students) are strongly encouraged to report safety complaints regarding the (1) mechanical condition of a bus (e.g., improper working lights/signals, inoperable flashing stop arm, or bald tires) or (2) unsafe actions or physical condition of a bus driver (e.g., driver texting while driving, nodding off, or speeding). Notification of the process for reporting complaints shall be provided to students and parents annually in the student handbook and/or via the District's website.

Complaints should be filed as soon as possible and may be submitted:

- In person at the SCS Transportation Office
- Telephone by contacting the safety hotline number located on the rear bumper of the bus **OR** the SCS Department of Transportation at 416-6077
- Email at scstransportation@scsk12.org

All complaints must be reduced to written form. Complaints received via the District's and/or safety hotline numbers must be appropriately documented by the person receiving the phone call and submitted to the District's Transportation Supervisor.

2. Investigating Complaints

Within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of a complaint, the vendor in collaboration with the Transportation Supervisor and other District staff as deemed appropriate shall begin an investigation of all bus safety complaints.

Within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the initial complaint, the Transportation Supervisor shall submit a preliminary report to the Superintendent and his/her designee. At a minimum, the report shall include the time and date of receipt of the complaint; a copy or summary of the complaint; name of the school bus driver involved; and any prior complaints or disciplinary actions taken against the driver.

Within sixty (60) school days of receipt of a complaint, the Transportation Supervisor shall submit a final report to the Superintendent and his/her designee in writing that includes any findings of the investigation and any action taken by the Transportation Supervisor in response to the complaint.

C. Maintenance of Records

In accordance with State statute and/or rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, the District shall maintain the following records (1) bus maintenance and inspections; (2) bus driver credentials, including required background checks, health records, and performance reviews; (3)

driver training records; and (4) complaints received and any records related to the investigation of those complaints. Additional records may be requested and maintained at the discretion of the District in accordance with contractual agreements. The vendor shall be responsible for providing the District with records (including video surveillance) as required and/or requested. The Transportation Supervisor shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of such records.

All accidents, regardless of the damage involved, must be reported to the Transportation Supervisor, including incidents in which any part of the bus contacts any other object or vehicle.

D. Ridership Eligibility

Criteria for bus ridership eligibility for the general student population are determined by the District. Student use of transportation provided by the District is a privilege and continued eligibility to use District transportation services may be suspended and/or revoked for violation of applicable policies and rules.

E. Bus Routes

Bus routes that ensure the most efficient and economical student transportation service shall be planned and established annually by the SCS transportation department and shall be implemented in accordance with the SCS Student Transportation Services Manual.

Waiver to Board or Exit the Bus at an Alternate Location

The District shall allow waivers permitting a student to board or exit his/her assigned bus at an alternate location other than his/her regular bus stop in accordance with established administrative rules and regulations. Additionally, waivers that result in an increase in associated student transportation cost for the District shall be prohibited.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

A. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

Legal References:

1. T.C.A. § 49-6-2101-2118
2. TRR/MS 0520-1-5-01
3. T.C.A. 55-50-302

Cross References:

1. 6050 Student Conduct on School Buses
2. 6057 Physical Relocation of Students

A. Video Surveillance Cameras on School Buses

Video surveillance cameras shall be installed on every school bus used to transport students to and from curricular and extracurricular activities. Video surveillance shall be used to promote the order, safety, and security of students, staff, and property. The video camera does not replace the authority and responsibility of the bus driver or school district administrative staff. Video surveillance cameras must be operational at all times that the route is in progress.

Video surveillance is to supplement and not replace written reports prepared by District staff and/or bus drivers. Any images of students recorded on videotape are subject to the confidentiality accorded student records under applicable laws, board policy, and administrative regulations. Video recordings may only be accessed by the parent of the student involved, employees of the school involved who have a legitimate educational interest in the recording, and SCS Security. The recording may be shared with the appropriate law enforcement agency in accordance with applicable laws and District guidelines.

The maintenance and availability of video surveillance by a vendor contracted by the District to provide school bus transportation services shall be in accordance with contracted terms and agreements.

Release of Video Recordings

In accordance with policy 7001 News Media Relations, the Superintendent serves as the chief spokesperson and is solely authorized to speak in an official capacity on behalf of the District. The Superintendent at his/her discretion may designate other staff to serve as spokesperson and representative in responding to media requests or give statements on behalf of the District. Release of information to the media and any other parties shall be in accordance with the law and applicable Board policies. Media requests shall be forwarded to the SCS Office of General Counsel.

B. Evacuation Drills

Bus evacuation drills shall be conducted throughout the school year to familiarize students with the proper procedures for safely evacuating the school bus in the event of an emergency.

C. Ridership Eligibility

SCS students enrolled in elementary schools who reside one and one-half (1 1/2) miles or more and students enrolled in middle or high schools who reside two (2) miles or more from their assigned schools shall be eligible for transportation services. Students attending a school on a general transfer request are not eligible for transportation services (see Policy 6002 – School Admission).

Exceptions may be granted for students residing less than the required designated miles from their assigned schools. Such exceptions may be granted to:

- Students receiving special education services who have a current IEP (Individual Education Program) indicating a need for special transportation services.

- Students with a 504 plan that indicates a need for student transportation as verified by a physician. A completed Student Information Form must be on file at the school and the Transportation Office.
- Students who reside in an area where traffic or other conditions make walking to and from school hazardous. Hazardous areas, as determined by an analysis conducted by the office responsible for student transportation services, shall be based on the following conditions:
 1. age of student
 2. traffic volume and/or speed
 3. roadway design/walkway conditions (i.e., curvy roads, sidewalks, ditches)
 4. other conditions as deemed appropriate

D. Waiver to Board or Exit the Bus at an Alternate Location

A waiver permitting a student to board or exit his/her assigned bus at an alternate location other than his/her regular bus stop may be made under the following conditions:

1. The request for a waiver must be made in writing by the parent/guardian at the school.
2. A legitimate need, as determined in the sole discretion of the Principal, must exist and there must be reasonable assurance that provisions are made for the safety of the student.
3. Granted waivers shall not exceed one (1) per year nor be subject to revocation by the parent for the school year in which it is granted.
4. The Principal is the designated authority to evaluate and approve or deny a request for a waiver based on the stated hardship; and for consulting with the office responsible for student transportation services as appropriate.
5. The Principal or his/her designee must document approved requests.

A waiver to board or exit the bus at an alternate location shall be effective for the same location every school day. Under no circumstances will a waiver be granted that changes or adds additional stops to the student's assigned bus route.

Individuals who have suggestions, questions, or concerns regarding student transportation may contact the Transportation Office at 416-6077.

[Request for Transportation Alternate Stop Waiver Form - pdf](#)

[Request for Transportation Alternate Stop Waiver \(Special Education Buses\) Form - pdf](#)