

FORSAN ISD

Transportation Department Handbook



2021-2022

Mission Statement

The Forsan ISD Transportation Department strives to provide safe and reliable transportation for all eligible students.

General Rules

All bus drivers and drivers of school vehicles are expected to have full knowledge of related rules/laws whether listed in this guide or not.

License

All district employees that are authorized to drive a school bus or other district vehicle to transport students must have a current Texas CDL Class A or B license with the P (passenger) and S (school bus) endorsements. The license must be carried by each driver at all times while operating a school bus or other district vehicle.

Each employee shall be responsible for reporting ***all*** traffic citations and accidents to his/her immediate supervisor within three days, regardless of whether the citation or accident occurred during work hours.

The Texas Department of Public Safety's motor vehicle penalty point system will be utilized to determine a bus driver's eligibility to drive a school bus or other vehicle used to transport students. A bus driver shall be subject to termination effective immediately at any time that a total of ten (10) penalty points have been assessed on his/her driving record, or sooner based on moving traffic violations that have not been recorded on the official record.

Certification/Training

All school bus drivers must obtain the Texas school bus driver certificate. Each bus driver shall be responsible to ensure that their certification is kept current.

Traffic Laws & Speed

All bus drivers shall obey all traffic laws of the State of Texas. School buses and other vehicles must be operated within the speed limits as specified by the State of Texas, or at a lesser rate, if warranted by the road conditions or weather.

Physical Examination

All school bus drivers must possess the physical and mental capabilities to safely operate a school bus; therefore, each driver must complete and submit documentation of an acceptable physical examination on an **annual** basis. A driver shall not operate a school bus unless he or she has on his or her person the original or photographic copy of the medical examiner's Certificate 391.43 stating that the driver is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle.

Each driver must report to his/her immediate supervisor any mental or physical condition which may impact his/her ability to safely operate a school bus or other vehicle used to transport students.

A medical examination may be required of any employee when, in the judgment of the immediate supervisor after consultation with the superintendent or designee, the employee's condition interferes with the ability to perform job-related functions or may pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee or others. The district may designate the physician to perform the examination and, in that case, shall pay the cost of the examination.

Drug & Alcohol Policy

The district prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances, illegal drugs, inhalants, and alcohol in the workplace.

Operators of school buses and other district vehicles shall be subject to alcohol and drug testing in accordance with federal regulations. Required testing includes pre-employment, post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, return-to-duty, and follow-up testing. No driver shall refuse to submit to a post-accident alcohol or controlled substances test, a random alcohol or controlled substances test, a reasonable suspicion alcohol or controlled substances test, or a return-to-duty or follow-up alcohol or controlled substances test. The district shall not permit a driver who refuses to submit to such tests to perform or continue to perform safety-sensitive functions. Any positive drug test will lead to immediate termination.

Communications

No cell phones or radios shall be used by the driver while the vehicle is in motion. The communication equipment shall be used only for school-related purposes. At no time shall a head-set listening device be used while operating a school bus or other vehicle.

Attendance

The department's goal of providing reliable transportation to all students cannot be accomplished without your presence at work on a daily basis.

All transportation employees are required to be on duty as scheduled unless a request for discretionary leave has been pre-approved, or an unexpected medical necessity has arisen. Employees that will be absent due to unforeseen circumstances must contact the transportation supervisor or director within two hours of the duty report time. An **Absence from Duty Report** shall be completed for each absence and submitted to the Transportation Director for approval. **Requests for discretionary personal leave shall be submitted at least two days prior to the absence.**

All transportation employees shall complete a timesheet at the beginning and ending of each shift and/or extra assignment, and/or complete the mileage log as appropriate. Failure to complete the paperwork may result in disciplinary action and lost wages.

Discipline

All district employees shall perform their job duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violations of policies, regulations and guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Violators will be subject to one or more of the discipline interventions listed below:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning (letter of counseling sheet)
- Suspension
- Termination of employment

Bus Stops

All students who use district transportation shall board buses at authorized stops. Authorized bus stops shall be designated annually by the campus principal, in cooperation with the regular bus driver(s). Bus drivers shall load and unload passengers only at authorized stops.

Elementary students must not be left at home unless a parent/guardian or secondary student (able to act as a guardian) is present to receive the child. If no parent/guardian is present, the child must be returned to the elementary campus. If safe to do so, the driver shall stop the bus and make a phone call or use the two-way radio to notify the campus that the bus is in route back to the campus with the child. This is standard operating procedure. Variations from this should be approved by the campus principal before the child is left with someone other than the approved guardian.

All students shall be unloaded only at authorized bus stops. If at the end of a route, a student has not exited the bus at their appropriate bus stop, the student shall be returned to the appropriate campus. At no time shall a student be let off the bus at a location other than their designated bus stop, unless the parent has requested an exception in accordance with district procedures. District procedures for an exception require the parent(s) to submit a written, signed note to the appropriate campus. Exceptions shall not be made by the driver.

Bus or Vehicle Condition

It shall be the driver's and mechanic's joint responsibility to ensure that before every route/trip that the bus or other vehicle is in a safe, operable condition. If the driver feels that the bus is unsafe to operate, he/she shall immediately inform the mechanic and transportation supervisor. No driver shall be required to drive a bus or vehicle that has been verified as unsafe to drive by the mechanic and/or transportation supervisor.

Serious vehicle malfunctions must be reported to the mechanic and transportation supervisor immediately.

The mechanic shall act quickly to repair all bus or vehicle malfunctions on the basis of severity. All preventive maintenance shall be performed during the mid-day when the buses and/or vehicles tend to be unscheduled.

The driver shall be responsible to ensure that the assigned bus or vehicle is in a clean condition (both interior and exterior). Notify the transportation/maintenance department if the bus needs to be washed. In addition, the bus must always be fueled at

no less than the half-tank level before every route or trip. Any scratches, dents, or malfunctions shall be reported to the transportation supervisor or director immediately.

Accidents

All minor and major accidents shall be reported immediately to the transportation supervisor or director via radio contact. Passengers, if any, shall be kept on the bus unless safety hazards warrant an evacuation of the bus or vehicle. If any passengers are injured, the driver and/or aide shall follow recommended first aid procedures.

The vehicle's engine should be turned off, the emergency hazard flashers activated, and the reflectors placed in the appropriate locations.

A written statement shall be completed and submitted to the transportation director by the driver. If another staff member was present on the bus, that person shall submit a written statement at the same time.

A list of passengers, if any, must be submitted with the accident report.

Superintendent's Office: 432-457-2223 ext. 2

Forsan High School: 432-457-2223 ext. 1

Forsan Elementary: 432-457-0091

Howard County Sheriff's Office: 432-264-2244

DPS: 432-676-6855

911

Standards of Conduct

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. At no time shall employees engage in physical or verbal abuse of their co-workers. Violations of this directive will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Other Transportation Department Duties

All transportation employees shall be expected to perform other transportation duties as assigned by the transportation supervisor or director. Other duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cleaning the inside of buses: sweeping, mopping, cleaning windows, seats and other equipment
- On rare occasions, fueling the buses and other vehicles, checking fluid levels and inspecting the buses and other vehicles for damage, repairs, etc.
- Other job-related duties as assigned

Reports

Drivers shall be responsible for completing several reports as directed. All reports shall be prepared accurately and submitted in a timely manner.

Daily membership counts are utilized by the state to reimburse the district for some of the transportation costs. An accurate daily membership count must be taken each

month and submitted to the transportation supervisor. In addition, daily attendance on special education routes are utilized by the state to reimburse the district for some of the special education transportation costs.

The actual miles driven must be recorded for all trips, other than regular routes, on the appropriate form and submitted to the transportation supervisor.

Special Needs/Special Education Transportation

There may be routes for special needs children that require very specific additional or different rules. (seatbelts, monitors, different vehicles, etc.)

Student Welfare

The students' welfare is our first priority! All district vehicles shall be operated in a safe manner to ensure the welfare of our students.

The bus driver and paraprofessionals are typically the first school district employees that the students encounter in the morning. You should greet all students cheerfully and consistently to present a warm and uplifting start to their day.

At the end of each route or trip, the bus driver must check the bus or vehicle to ensure that no students remain on the bus. Failing to realize that a sleeping child has stayed on a bus could result in injuries to a child or a fatality.

It is the driver's responsibility to inspect the bus in the morning to verify that no person or animal has gained entry to the bus overnight. It is the driver's responsibility to inspect the bus in the afternoon to verify that no student has remained on the bus. The seats and floors must be checked thoroughly.

If a student is located on the bus, the supervisor must be notified immediately, as well as the appropriate campus or district office.

If personal items are located on the bus, such as clothes, backpacks, books, etc., they shall be inventoried and submitted to the supervisor.

No "Standees"

Bus drivers and other staff members may not require or allow a child to stand on a moving bus or other vehicle.

Student Discipline

The driver shall ensure that student discipline is maintained at all times during routes and trips. In the event of a serious discipline incident, the driver shall stop the bus at a safe location, call the transportation supervisor or director, and attempt to stabilize the event without touching or injuring any student. Under no circumstances should any student be discharged from a bus except at their school or authorized drop-off location.

The driver shall complete a **Disciplinary Report** at the end of the route or trip and submit to the appropriate campus administrator.

The bus rules exist to promote the safety of all students while riding the bus. Misconduct will not be tolerated and disciplinary referrals to the office will be dealt with as follows:

1 st Offense	Warning
2 nd Offense	Five (5) day suspension of bus privileges (Parents must provide transportation.)
3 rd Offense	Ten (10) day suspension of bus privileges (Parents must provide transportation.)
4 th Offense	Twenty (20) day suspension of bus privileges (Parents must provide transportation.)
5 th Offense	Possible revocation of bus privileges for remainder of school year

Students will be accountable for misconduct according to the *Student Code of Conduct*. The principal or assistant principal has the right to skip any of the listed steps if deemed necessary.

Drivers are expected to create a seating chart with students assigned to specific seats. This allows the students to be held accountable for damage to seats, trash, etc. It allows the administrator to determine who would be likely witnesses as various incidents are investigated. Assigned seats also allow the bus driver to move a student to help with noise or minor discipline issues.

No food or drinks are allowed for the students. Bringing food/drinks on the bus creates trash and mess and is a choking hazard on a bumpy bus.

Discipline referral forms are available in each campus office.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Additionally, other prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion. Examples of prohibited harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Any district employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced prohibited harassment is required to immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person.

Child Abuse

Any professional who has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected shall make a report as required by law. The report must be made within 48 hours after the professional first suspects abuse or neglect. A "professional" is a person who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, and juvenile detention or correctional officers. **School bus drivers are also included.**

Emergencies

An emergency situation can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. It could be a crash, a stalled school bus on a railroad-highway crossing or in a high speed intersection, an electrical fire in the engine compartment, a medical emergency with a student on the school bus, etc. Knowing what to do in an emergency – before, during, and after an evacuation – can mean the difference between life and death.

All drivers should review and be familiar with the Emergency Exit and Evacuation procedures as outlined in the Commercial Driver's Manual, Section 10: School Buses. Your safety and the safety of your passengers will depend on your ability to act quickly and appropriately. At all times, the transportation supervisor or director should be contacted when an emergency arises.

Safety

Danger Zones

The danger zones extend as much as 30 feet from the front bumper, 10 feet from the left and right sides of the bus, and 10 feet from the rear bumper of the school bus. Proper adjustment of all mirrors is vital to the safe operation of the school bus in order to observe the danger zones around the bus and to look for students, traffic and other objects in these areas. Refer to the Commercial Driver's Manual, Section 10: School Buses for additional detail on the proper manner to adjust the mirrors.

Remember that railroad crossings represent a seriously dangerous area. School buses must always "stop, look, and listen" before crossing.

Loading & Unloading Passengers

More students are killed while getting on or off a school bus each year than are killed as passengers inside of a school bus. Following established loading and unloading procedures will minimize the risk of student injury.

Students should wait in a designated location for the school bus and board the bus only when directed by the driver or monitor. Count the number of students waiting to board the bus, ensure that all have boarded and have taken a seat before preparing to continue on the route.

To ensure student safety while unloading at the designated route stops, the driver should ensure that all students remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop,

after stopping all students safely exit the bus, and walk at least 10 feet away from the bus. If students are crossing in front of the bus, the driver must ensure that every student has crossed the street and cleared the path of the bus before proceeding.

As the route is created, it is important to consider paths that allow for students to off-load without crossing the street whenever possible.

If a loading or unloading designated stop has been missed – DO NOT BACK UP!

Buses often appear to be driving too fast simply due to their large physical size. Most community complaints involving buses relate to the perception that the bus was being unsafe by driving too fast or by failing to come to a complete stop as required. Driving below the speed limit may be appropriate at times.

**Transportation Handbook
Acknowledgement of Receipt & Compliance
2021-2022**

Employees are required, as part of their employment, to sign a statement agreeing to study and to follow all departmental rules and procedures.

Any employee violating the rules and procedures of this handbook or directives of their immediate supervisor(s) shall be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Transportation Handbook and that I will comply with all of the rules and procedures contained herein.

Date

Printed Name

Signature