



# Chattahoochee County Board of Education Bus Driver Handbook



AUG 2023

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***\*IMPORTANT:*** Upon completion of reading this handbook, sign the ***“Receipt of Bus Driver Handbook”*** form on **page 9** and submit it to the BOE Office.

The Transportation Director will develop and disseminate responsibilities of bus drivers at the start of each school year and as needed throughout the year. Transportation Director will develop a bus driver training plan. Meetings will be held on a monthly basis with dissemination of safety and other information being made to attendees.

## **GENERAL DUTIES:**

Operation of a school bus under all types of weather conditions including, but not limited to sun, fog, rain, sleet, hail, snow, and/or ice. Transporting students and other authorized persons on routes “to and from school” as well as regular, special education, vocational, or extracurricular trips as authorized by the local school system.

## **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- Successfully complete the school bus driver training program and any courses as prescribed by the state and local Board of Education.
- Operate the school bus in a safe and efficient manner.
- Conduct thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspections of the school bus and any special equipment.
- Maintain orderly conduct of student passengers.
- Report unsafe acts or conditions.
- Operate the school bus in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia and the policies of the State and the Local Board of Education.
- Conduct emergency evacuation drills as required by the State.
- Communicate effectively and professionally with school staff, students, and the public.
- Complete legible, accurate, and required reports in the prescribed manner and on a timely basis.
- Provide maximum safety for passengers while on the bus and during the loading and unloading of the bus.
- Clean and service the school bus which includes, but is not limited to: sweeping, washing, fueling, checking fluid levels, etc., to the extent prescribed by the local school system. Maintain sufficient fuel level to do a route, field trip, and/or emergency evacuations. This includes assigned and spare buses.
- Report needed repairs accurately and in a timely manner.
- Maintain routes and schedules as planned by the Transportation Coordinator.
- Report any hazards along the existing route to the Transportation Coordinator.
- Attend all required training classes, in-services, and monthly staff meetings.
- Maintain a scheduled monthly bus service and keep the bus in clean and presentable condition.
- Perform any other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Transportation Coordinator.

## **Driver Duties and Compensation**

Full-time Chattahoochee County School Bus Drivers will receive a minimum of five hours pay per day on the days school is in session for students. Any hour over five per day must be approved ahead of time by the Transportation Coordinator and/or the Operations Director.

To maintain licensing and driver certification, there will be additional requirements that include but are not limited to: mandatory in-service meetings, annual state bus driver's meetings, adherence to the monthly bus inspection schedule, mandatory re-training for any chargeable accident and/or safety violation, annual physical, and/or drug/alcohol testing. Hours for these additional requirements will be accounted for on a separate timesheet kept by the Transportation Coordinator.

Regular work hours shall start when the bus driver starts his or her pre-trip inspection prior to starting a route and end when the bus driver completes their post trip inspection. It is expected that all fueling, sweeping, and cleaning of the bus should be accounted for during down time between a route/trip, after pre-trip inspection, or after the driver completes their post-trip inspection as part of the regular five hour work day. Any extra time to complete these tasks should be reported to the Transportation Coordinator.

All full-time bus drivers and bus monitors shall document their actual hours worked on the appropriate time sheet issued by the Transportation Coordinator. All full-time drivers and monitors are responsible for signing, dating, and submitting their own time sheet on the date designated by the Transportation Coordinator. Time sheets for substitute bus drivers will also be kept by the Transportation Coordinator. The Transportation Coordinator and/or Operations Director may randomly review the bus GPS tracking system to verify time sheets.

## **Driver of Excellence Bonus Pay**

A **Full-Time Bus Driver** who is employed with the Chattahoochee County Schools' Board of Education that **meets all the stipulations of the current policy and meets all the criteria status as defined in the Driver of Excellence area** will be qualified to receive a pay bonus from the Chattahoochee County Board of Education. **A bus driver's bonus pay opportunity may be affected by but is not limited to: attendance, reprimands, and safety violations.** If awarded, a Full-Time Bus Driver's Bonus pay **will not** be presented until the last pay period of the fiscal year (June Check). Bus drivers are welcome to discuss their status to the Driver of Excellence Bonus Pay with the Transportation Coordinator.

**Driver of Excellence Bonus Pay up to a sum of \$1000.00 per year to be paid according to the following qualifications and rules:**

- Excellence is defined as follows:
  - No Safety Violations
  - No Reprimands
  - 95% attendance as computed by the following formula:
    - 165 x 95% = 156.75 days present (Head Start Driver Only)
    - 180 x 95% = 171 days present
- Employee must make the majority of their salary driving the bus (51% or more).
- Employee must be a Full-Time Bus Driver.
- Bonus is payable upon completion of the third fiscal school year of excellence and every year thereafter if excellence is maintained.
- If a driver does not meet criteria, they would have to wait one complete school year to re-establish excellence.
- Fiscal year is defined as July 1 – June 30.
- Bonus pay will not be rewarded until the last pay period of the fiscal year (June Check).
- Current employees as of July 2012 will be grandfathered.

Phase 1	3-5 years of service	\$300.00
Phase 2	6-10 years of service	\$600.00
Phase 3	11-20 years and above	\$1,000.00

## **Field/Athletic Trips**

During the year, Chattahoochee County School groups will take educational field trips and/or athletic trips. Bus drivers are paid for these trips on an hourly basis. Time will be properly deducted from regular bus hours if the trip falls within the A.M. or P.M. route time. All trips that the bus driver is required to stay overnight will have eight hours deducted from trip for sleep time. Work time cannot exceed **sixteen hours per day**. All field trip vouchers must be completely filled out on the proper form and submitted to the Transportation Office at the end of each pay period. **A Bus Driver shall include their pre-trip and post trip times on all field trip vouchers.**

## **Work-Related Injury**

**All employees must report any work-related accidents/incidents immediately to the Transportation Coordinator.** All accidents/incidents need to be documented on an accident/incident form located in the Transportation Office. A written statement may also be requested from individuals on the bus. This also includes all employees and/or student(s) who may have developed and/or received an injury that occurred while being transported or that occurred at the bus stop waiting for the bus to arrive or depart. All documents are to be submitted accurately and in a timely manner to the Transportation Coordinator and/or Operations Director. The respective school and the transportation office **shall** be notified of a student(s) injury as soon as possible.

## **Leave Request Forms**

All Bus Drivers and Bus Monitors must fill out a leave request forms for all types of leave including but not limited to: sick, personal, jury duty, and/or vacation. All Bus Drivers, with assigned routes, must call the Transportation Coordinator no later than thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of their route to report being out. The Bus Driver and/or Bus Monitor can fill out a leave request form on the day upon returning to work following an illness. If the employee is out for **five or more consecutive days, a doctor's excuse is required.** Leave forms for doctor appointments and/or other similar appointments are required to be submitted prior to the time of the absent day. **Prior approval in writing from the Transportation Coordinator and/or Operations Director is required before any personal leave will be granted.** Bus Driver(s) who **qualify and earn** vacation days shall not take them on a day that school is in session for students.

## **Annual Physical**

Bus Driver's physical exam date is set each year by the Transportation Coordinator. **The physical forms used must be GaDOE Pupil Transportation approved. No Exceptions.** These are available in the transportation office. If a Bus Driver fails to meet his or her scheduled appointment on the assigned date and time, it will become the responsibility of the Bus Driver to re-schedule their own physical at their own expense. Bus Drivers need to meet with the Transportation Coordinator, if he or she cannot meet on the assigned date or time to complete the physical. The Transportation Office will be responsible for issuing the approved physical form to all Bus Drivers.

## **Dress Code**

The Chattahoochee County Transportation Department recognizes that appropriate dress and grooming of employees are significant factors in the educational process of students. In efforts to create an exemplary model for students, every Bus Driver of the Chattahoochee County Board of Education is required to maintain a level of personal hygiene necessary to ensure an appropriate educational environment and to refrain from any mode of dress that is not exemplary for students. The minimum expectation of employees regarding dress and grooming will exceed those standards required in the policies and regulations for student dress and grooming.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Shorts should be no more than three inches above the knee. (while standing)
- Drivers shall wear appropriate footwear with attaching heel guards or straps.
- Any type of "flip-flop" will not be permitted.
- No see-through or revealing garments are permitted.

## **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

All classified and certified employees of Chattahoochee County Schools who hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and who also operate and/or have reason to move a school bus or commercial vehicle are subject to this section. The Chattahoochee County Board of Education will adhere to all laws regarding drug testing in the workplace for employees who hold a Commercial Driver's License. The program includes, but is not limited to: pre-employment screening, post-accident screening, random screening, reasonable cause screening, return to work screening, and follow-up screening. All employees are responsible for their own transportation to and from the drug and alcohol testing facility. It is mandatory that you take responsibility to be tested randomly when asked to do so, **No Exceptions.** **Failure of an employee to report to the testing site when requested to do so by the Transportation Department will count as a refusal to submit a sample and may result in termination!** The employee will report to the testing site no later than (1) one hour after he or she has been notified by the Transportation Coordinator. Once the employee checks in to the facility, he or she will stay inside the facility as a precaution not to be counted as a refusal to submit for testing. **The employee's work time will start when the Transportation Department notifies the employee and their work time ends when the drug/alcohol testing sample is submitted at the testing site.**

## **Prescribed Medicine**

Employees are required to notify the Transportation Coordinator **immediately** if they are involved in a prescribed medical treatment program that includes any drug which may alter their behavior, physical, or mental abilities. Transportation Coordinator or facilities director may suspend a bus driver until proper medical notification is provided stating the driver is clear to resume driving.

## **Bus Inspections**

Cleanliness and care of the bus are the responsibility of the driver assigned to that bus. This includes ensuring the bus is adequately fueled to complete the assigned route and/or trip. Drivers should notify the Transportation Coordinator and/or the Operations Director if they are experiencing trouble getting fuel for a bus. Failure to properly care for and maintain the assigned bus may result in some form of reprimand. At the end of the school year drivers should top off their bus with fuel and clean their assigned buses inside and outside. The bus shop facilities are available for your use in this regard. Cleaning supplies and materials will be provided.

## **Monthly Inspection**

At the beginning of each month, each Bus Driver will receive a monthly bus maintenance schedule designating the date and time that the bus they are responsible for (assigned or spare) is scheduled to be brought in for its monthly inspection and service. This monthly inspection is required by state law and is a safety necessity. Service and inspection time for most buses is between the hours of 8:00 A.M. until 1:45 P.M. On scheduled maintenance days, do not ask for your assigned bus **before 1:45 P.M.** Please contact the Transportation Coordinator to discuss any schedule conflicts with extracurricular trips or etc.

## **Transporting Students**

Each Bus Driver should assign seats to promote order on the school bus. Seating assignment should start with Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> graders sitting toward the upper front half of the bus. Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> graders are expected to sit three per seat. Then continue assigning the remainder of seats for grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> toward the middle to the rear of the bus. This should help minimize any safety concerns such as a missing student and student behavior issues. When unloading students (after school route) Pre-K through 1<sup>st</sup> grade, a parent or designee is required to be waiting at the bus stop to receive these student(s) from the bus. The student(s) will not be released from the bus unless there is an authorized person waiting for him/her. When there is no one waiting to receive the student(s), the school administrator or designee should be notified and the Bus Driver will be given further instructions on whether the student shall return back their school.

## **Unauthorized Passengers**

Only employees or students enrolled in Chattahoochee County schools may ride the bus. Parents, siblings, children, spouses, and others who are not enrolled in the Chattahoochee County School System may not ride to or from school. The exception: individuals may ride in the capacity of an approved chaperone on field trips, if authorized to do so by their Respective School. **Bus drivers should not transport any person(s) other than specified above unless specifically authorized to do so by the Transportation Coordinator and/or facilities director. A Bus Driver may transport his/her own children only if they attend a School for which he/she drives. No pets or animals are allowed on the school bus except for service animals, such as canines, for a Special Education Student with a written IEP Program.**

## **Unauthorized Stops**

The location of bus stops is determined by the Transportation Department based on state and local guidelines. **Bus Drivers shall not add or delete stops, change pickup times, or change a bus route unless approval is received through the Transportation Coordinator and/or Operations Director unless there is a need to do so in an emergency situation which may endanger the passengers and/or the driver.**

## **Bus Accidents**

**All bus accidents shall immediately be reported to the Transportation Coordinator and/or facilities and operations director in accordance with State Board Rule 160-5-3-.08.** An accident is a sequence of events which produces unintended injury, death, and/or property damage. Any school bus incident that: (1) generates a police accident or incident report; (2) involves **any amount of property damage**; (3) involves operation of the bus which causes personal injury and/or fatality to occupants in the bus, in other vehicles and/or pedestrians should be reported to the Transportation Department. **Any Bus Driver who does not report involvement in a bus accident to the Transportation Coordinator may be in violation of procedure and may be subject to disciplinary action.**

## **CDL Citations**

All employees who possess a CDL and use their license to perform their work/duty within the school system Transportation Department **must report all citations except for a parking ticket to the Transportation Coordinator.** Failure to report a citation may result in a verbal warning, a written reprimand, suspension, up to termination. **This rule applies to any employee whether they are traveling in a Board of Education vehicle, or a personal vehicle at the time of the violation. No Exceptions!**

## **Bus Driver's Qualifications for Vehicle Operation**

All Bus Drivers **must** have a minimum **Class B driver's license with P & S endorsements** required by Federal, State, and Local laws. In order to perform a daily route(s) or in an event of an emergency, all Bus Drivers are required by the Chattahoochee County School System to have a Fort Benning Access Entry Photo I.D. card and/or a Military/Veterans I.D. card that allows the Bus Driver to enter Post with no problem. All bus drivers must submit a current copy of their Fort Benning Access Entry Photo I.D. card and/or a Military/Veterans I.D. card to the Transportation Coordinator each year.

## **Electronic Devices**

The driver of a school bus shall not use and/or operate any electronic devices, to include but not limited to a cell phone, while the bus is in motion, unless it is being used in a manner similar to a two-way radio to allow live communication between the driver and school officials or public safety officials. The electronic device should be the secondary option if the two-way radio is not functioning properly. The device **should not** be where the Bus Driver has to **reach for, dial, and/or hold the actual electronic device**. A Bus Driver **should be able to initiate, answer, or terminate a call by touching a single button** on an electronic device and/or a headset. This action does not require the Bus Driver to take his or her eyes off of the forward roadway for an extended period—**comparable to using vehicle controls or instrument panel functions, such as the radio or climate control system . . .** **Absolutely no writing, sending, or reading text based communication is allowed while operating the school bus.**

## **Bus Discipline**

Riding the bus is a privilege. Students transported to school are expected to behave in a manner which is conducive to the safety and welfare of all riders. Drivers will insure that students follow all bus rules and regulations. **Violators will be reported to the principal or their designee using a bus discipline form. Drivers do not have the authority to remove a student from the bus or deny bus privileges to any student.**

Principals or their designee will act on all discipline referrals and support bus drivers to insure that students behave appropriately on the bus. Students who violate bus conduct regulations will be disciplined per applicable discipline policies and could be suspended from bus transportation privileges.

Discipline issues and problems will be discussed in monthly bus driver meetings. Principals or their designee are always invited to attend these meetings.

## **Bus Stops**

Bus transportation will be provided for all students desiring service. Transportation Director will develop bus stops based on transportation requirements.

Students will be at their designated bus stop up to 10 minutes prior to pick up. Parents may check with the local school or the Transportation Department for bus stop schedules and associated problems. Bus will not stop if student is not at stop. Bus driver is not required to stop and blow the horn to alert parents that the bus is there to pick up student.

**Students will only be dropped off at their designated bus stop.** Students desiring to get off at a stop other than their stop must have a bus pass signed by school administrative personnel. Bus pass should include a physical street address.

**Pre-K and Kindergarten parents shall be at the bus stop to receive their child. Otherwise students will be returned to school and the parent will be responsible to pick up the child at the school.**

## **Dissemination of Information**

Transportation Director will develop bus stops based on transportation requirements and school enrollment. School principals or designee will provide Transportation Director with an initial student list and will provide an updated student roster as needed. Changes will be made to bus routes as required and will only be made by Transportation Director.

Principals or designee will provide the Transportation Director with the names of all students having an IEP or 504 plan. Transportation Director will provide bus drivers with the names of those students that might require special transportation services. Transportation requirements should be included on all IEP's and/or 504 plans.

## **Inclement Weather**

The Chattahoochee County Board of Education is concerned for the safety of all students, to include those students riding the bus.

The Transportation Director will develop a calling tree to insure that all drivers are called in a timely manner.

In the case of inclement weather, the Transportation Director will inform all bus drivers using the telephone calling tree to notify them that school has been cancelled or delayed.

## **Actions & Consequences**

Failure to properly adhere to and/or execute any of the aforementioned sections in the Bus Driver Handbook may result in some form of reprimand to include but not limited to: verbal warning, a written reprimand, suspension, and/or up to termination.



# RECEIPT OF BUS DRIVER HANDBOOK

► Bus Driver Name: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT CLEARLY

## Adherence to the Policies and Procedures of Chattahoochee County:

I understand the 2023-2024 Chattahoochee County Board of Education Bus Driver Handbook is available for my review on the Chattahoochee County Schools website ([www.chattco.org](http://www.chattco.org)).

My signature indicates that I further understand that **I am responsible for reading, following, and implementing these policies and procedures.**

It is my responsibility to seek clarification for any questions that I may have regarding expectations.

► Bus Driver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Submit a copy of this signed page to the BOE Office upon completion.*



## CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTY SCHOOLS



326 Broad Street, Cusseta, Georgia. 31804

[www.chattco.org](http://www.chattco.org)

Board Office: 706.989.3774

High School: 706.989.3678

Middle School: 706.989.3678

Education Center: 706.989.3648

*Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider*

AUG 2023