

POLICY

2012

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T/EB

Non-Instructional/Business
Operations

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM

The safe transportation of students to and from school is of primary concern in the administration of the school bus program. All state laws and regulations pertaining to the safe use of school buses shall be observed by drivers, students and school personnel.

To assure the safety and security of students boarding or exiting school buses on school property, it shall be unlawful for a driver of a vehicle to pass a stopped school bus when the red bus signal is in operation.

Use of Cell Phones and Portable Electronic Devices Prohibited

Use of portable electronic devices by a school bus driver at times the vehicle is in operation poses a potential safety risk. All school bus drivers are prohibited from using portable electronic devices while the bus is in operation and/or students are on the bus.

Personal cell phones are to be placed in the "off" position when in the possession of the school bus driver. Cell phones or other electronic devices may be used only in case of emergency.

The following terms are defined as:

- a) "Portable electronic device" shall mean any mobile telephone (hand held or "hands free"), personal digital assistant (PDA), portable device with mobile data access, laptop computer, pager, broadband personal communication device, two-way messaging device, electronic game, or portable computing device.
- b) "Using" shall mean holding, using a speaker device either internal or external to the portable electronic device, being connected to a "blue tooth" or otherwise similar device for the purpose of transmitting or receiving any electronic or other signals, calls, or messages, including but not limited to text messages, electronic mail, and/or telephone calls viewing, taking or transmitting images, playing games, or composing, sending, reading, viewing, accessing, browsing, transmitting, saving or retrieving e-mail, text messages, or other electronic data.
- c) "In operation" shall mean that the bus engine is running, whether in motion or not.

Other forms of driver distraction, whether or not an actual distraction occurs, shall also be prohibited while a vehicle is in operation. Such activities shall include, but not be limited, to the following: eating, drinking, personal grooming, reading, or any other activity which might reasonably affect the ability of the driver to provide unhindered attention to the operation of the vehicle.

(Continued)

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SUBJECT: SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM (Cont'd)

The Transportation Supervisor, in cooperation with the Principals, has the responsibility of developing and publishing safety rules to be followed by drivers and passengers, including rules of student conduct. In order to ensure maximum safety to those riding school buses, it is necessary that students and drivers cooperate in this effort. There is no substitute for training to develop safe habits in pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

All buses and other vehicles owned by vendors/contract bus companies with whom the District contracts will have frequent safety inspections and be serviced regularly. The Transportation Supervisor will maintain a comprehensive record of all maintenance performed on each vehicle.

Every bus driver is required to report promptly any school bus accident involving death, injury, or property damage. All accidents, regardless of damage involved, must be reported at once to the Transportation Supervisor by the vendors/contract bus companies.

Education Law Section 3623

Vehicle and Traffic Law Sections 509-a(7), 509-1(1-b), 1174(a) and 1174(b)

8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Section 156.3

NOTE: Refer also to Policies #5683 -- Fire Drills, Bomb Threats and Bus Emergency Drills
#5741 -- Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers and Other Safety-Sensitive Employees

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Revised 1/24/12