



The School Board of Okeechobee County

Chapter 8.00: Auxiliary Services

8.21*

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION AND SCHOOL BUS USE

POLICY

Each student who is transported shall be entitled to free transportation provided he / she abides by the rules of safety and behavior necessary to operate the District's transportation system. Serious infraction of these rules may result in the loss of the student's privilege. The student's parent(s) or legal guardian shall be responsible for making sure the student abides by the rules or for providing the student's transportation. Suspension from a bus shall not affect the attendance laws and rules.

I. Any student who resides two (2) or more miles from his / her designated school by the most direct traveled route is eligible to ride the school bus to and from that school. These students shall be reported for funding purposes. Under the following conditions, students who reside within two (2) miles of the designated school may be eligible to ride the school bus.

A. Special authorization is granted by the School Board.

B. An exceptional student not requiring special care may ride a school bus regardless of distance from home to school upon furnishing a statement from the Supervisor of Exceptional Students certifying that the student is handicapped and is unable to walk to school.

II. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee may approve a request in writing from a parent or guardian that a student be transported to or from an existing bus stop location other than that stop where the student resides. The alternate stop location must be in the same attendance zone and the student must be transported to the same stop each day. An exception to this provision may be made by the high school principal or his/her designee for students in grades 9-12 if the following documentation is provided:

- A. Certified copy of court ordered joint or shared custody of the student;
- B. Signatures of both parents of the student on the Transportation Request Form provided by the school;
- C. Notation by the parents of the student on a calendar to be provided by the school of consistent days and/or weeks the student is assigned to the residence of each parent.

III. Annually, prior to the opening of school and the designation of bus routes, the Superintendent may recommend and the Board may approve non-transportation zones that are composed of all areas in the school district from which it is unnecessary or impractical to furnish transportation.

Notwithstanding the designation of non-transportation zones above, in unusual cases each involving eight (8) students or less living in sparsely settled areas, the Board may offer reimbursement to a parent of the cost of operating a vehicle or other conveyance for transporting said students to a public school in the zone in which they reside provided that:

- A. The payment for such conveyance shall not exceed statutory requirements;
- B. Agreements to share the cost of operating such conveyance shall be set forth in the minutes of the Board including the amount, mileage to bus route or school, names of students and the school attended.
- C. The Board shall not expend funds to share in the expense of operating such vehicle to provide transportation of students whose homes are within a reasonable walking distance of the assigned school or bus route.
- D. Requests for such expense sharing shall be presented in writing annually, checked against State Board of Education rules, and considered by the Board on an individual basis.

IV. The Superintendent is authorized to permit the use of District-owned passenger cars for transporting students when it is determined a school bus is unnecessary or impractical. The District-owned passenger car shall be operated by a School Board employee and no more than eight (8) students shall be transported. Students shall be placed in designated seating positions.

V. Only a student who is regularly enrolled as a transported student and whose name appears on the roster or with an approved bus pass for that bus shall be permitted to ride such bus while it is being operated on a regular school bus route.

VI. No person shall be eligible for transportation on a field trip or extracurricular school trip unless he/she is authorized by the principal or designee.

VII. Maximum regard for the safety of students and due consideration for the protection

of health of all students transported shall be primary requirements in the routing of buses, establishing student stops, appointing drivers, and in providing and operating transportation equipment.

VIII. In order to improve the safety and security of our students, the following procedures will be implemented:

A. In the event of an emergency in the home, a time-limited bus pass may be issued for a student to ride a bus that they are not normally assigned to ride. Bus passes will not be issued for convenience, recreational, or occasional transportation purposes.

B. If a bus pass is required for documented emergency purposes for more than a five (5) day period, it must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

C. Multiple bus passes for different days and locations will not be approved.

D. Bus passes may not be issued during FTE count periods unless the situation is determined to be an emergency.

E. In no case may a bus pass be used to circumvent the zone waiver policy, i.e. that a student attending school on a zone waiver will not be provided transportation by the district.

IX. A student who arrives early or remains late because of transportation service shall be under school supervision at all times and shall, if practicable, have a planned schedule of activities. The principal shall be responsible for providing such supervision.

X. Each route shall be planned and adjusted as nearly as possible to the bus capacity. Travel each morning and afternoon shall be considered in planning and establishing bus routes and shall not exceed fifty (50) minutes for elementary students and sixty (60) minutes for secondary students when practicable. When feasible, no more than one and one-half hours should elapse between the time the student boards the bus and the time school begins or the time school closes and the time of leaving the bus in the afternoon.

XI. It shall be the policy of this Board that insofar as practicable no diesel fueled bus over the age of fifteen (15) years shall be assigned to a regular bus route.

XII. All requests for the use of school buses for transportation other than for regular school attendance shall be submitted on the proper form ten (10) days in advance of the special trip and approved by the Superintendent or his / her designee. The assignment of the bus and operator for said special event shall be made by the Supervisor of Transportation after receiving written notice that said special trip has been approved by the Superintendent or his / her designee.

XIII. The District School Board authorizes the Superintendent to permit the use of a school bus for non-school activities subject to the following:

A. The use of a school bus shall be restricted to other local or state governmental agencies or non-commercial ventures sponsored by an organization serving a public purpose not contrary to established public policy.

B. Application for the use of a school bus shall be submitted to the Superintendent.

C. Upon approval by the Superintendent but not less than five (5) working days before the intended use, the user agency or organization shall deliver to the Coordinator of Transportation a certificate of insurance issued by a company licensed to do business in the state of Florida. The certificate shall name the District School Board of Okeechobee County as an "additional insured" which is to indemnify and to hold harmless the School Board from any and all liability by virtue of the use of the bus. In addition, liability insurance coverage will be as specified under existing statute.

D. It is understood that the operator for the vehicle shall be an operator certified by the District School Board.

E. Compensation to the School District shall be sufficient to cover the fixed and operating costs incurred.

XIV. Periodically student transportation routes and student walking conditions shall be reviewed to determine if hazardous conditions exist. Appropriate request for designation of hazardous conditions shall be provided as required by state law or State Board of Education rules.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.42, F.S.

LAWS IMPLEMENTED:

1000.21; 1001.43; 1006.21; 1006.21(3); 1006.23; 1011.68, F.S.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

6A-3.001; 6A-3.017

RULES:

HISTORY:

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