

<u>Section E:</u>  <b>Business Management</b>	<b>Knox County Board of Education Policy</b>		
	<b>Student Transportation Management</b>	Descriptor Code:	Issued:
		<b>E-170</b>	<b>7/95</b>
		Reviewed:	Revised:
	<b>1/25</b>	<b>3/25</b>	

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School buses shall be maintained and operated in accordance with state law and State Board of Education Rules and Regulations.<sup>1</sup>

The school transportation program shall be monitored daily by school administrators and the Transportation Department and subjected to periodic evaluations by them. The Director of Transportation shall maintain an overall evaluation and a summary report shall be submitted to the Director of Schools or the Board as needed by request.

**REPORTING ACCIDENTS**

All accidents involving a school bus or any other vehicle providing transportation services to Knox County Schools, regardless of the damage involved, must adhere to the following:

- Immediately dial 911 to report the incident and then inform the Director of the Transportation Department or the Director’s designee;
- Vehicles will remain at the accident site until released by law enforcement;
- The driver should not attempt to place the blame for the accident or admit responsibility for the accident and make a possible determination of the cause. This will be determined through investigation;
- When a police report is completed in relation to an accident involving a vehicle providing transportation services to Knox County Schools, a copy of the police report must be submitted to the Transportation Department within five (5) days and Tennessee Department of Safety within twenty (20) days;<sup>2</sup>
- In the event law enforcement determines that a police report is unnecessary, the Knox County Schools Security Department will complete an incident report. The incident report shall be provided to the Transportation Department within five (5) days.

These requirements shall apply to accidents occurring upon highways and the premises of any shopping center, trailer park or any apartment house complex, or any other premises which are generally frequented by the public at large.<sup>3</sup>

**REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING SAFETY RELATED INFRACTIONS**

Anyone may report a suspected safety infraction incurred during the operation of a school bus by calling the transportation safety hotline number 865-594-1935. This line is manned by the transportation

1 customer service office from 6:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. on weekdays when school is in session and by the  
 2 Knox County Schools Security Dispatcher at all other times. All allegations will be directed to  
 3 appropriate Knox County Schools personnel for investigation, and all investigations will be completed in  
 4 accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-2116.

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 6 At the beginning of each school year, parents will be provided notification of the procedure to report  
 7 suspected bus related safety infractions.

## 8 9 **RECORDS RETENTION AND MAINTENANCE**

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 11 Beginning not later than January 1, 2018, the Knox County Schools Transportation Department shall  
 12 maintain the following records in either hardcopy or digital/electronic form:

- 13
- 14 1. School bus maintenance and inspection records
- 15 2. School bus driver credentials, background checks, health records and any completed performance
- 16 reviews
- 17 3. Driver training records; and
- 18 4. Any bus and driver related complaints received and any record of investigation of lodged
- 19 complaints

## 20 21 **END OF ROUTE BUS CHECK**

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 23 All drivers of a bus or any other vehicle transporting students for Knox County Schools shall fully inspect  
 24 their vehicle after dropping the final student from each school they serve or any time the vehicle is vacated  
 25 by the driver for any purpose to be certain that no child remains on the vehicle.<sup>4</sup>

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 27 A driver or contractor's failure to comply with this requirement shall result in disciplinary action as  
 28 appropriate.

## 29 30 **QUALIFICATIONS OF BUS DRIVERS EMPLOYED BY CONTRACTED PARTIES**

- 31
- 32 1. Bus driver applicants must be of good character, competency, and fitness to be employed.
- 33 2. No person shall be authorized to drive a school bus providing services to Knox County Schools
- 34 in any capacity until they have attained 25 years of age, have at least five consecutive years
- 35 unrestricted driving experience, satisfactorily complete a local and Tennessee Bureau of
- 36 Investigation background screening, and a drug screening as required by the DOT and Board
- 37 policy. A Certificate of Eligibility (Tennessee Department of Safety, Form 2-C) shall not be issued
- 38 until results of the investigation are made available to Knox County Schools<sup>5</sup>;
- 39
- 40 3. Drivers employed for individuals under a contractual agreement with the Board must be included
- 41 on the Driver Eligibility Roster maintained by the Transportation Department to provide services
- 42 in any capacity (including field trips and athletic events).
- 43
- 44 4. School bus drivers shall possess a valid commercial driving license with appropriate endorsements
- 45 to operate a school bus with an unrestricted operator's license.<sup>6</sup>
- 46
- 47 5. All bus drivers shall satisfactorily complete an annual physical examination.
- 48
- 49 6. DOT compliant or alternative drivers shall meet all qualifications and requirements for regular
- 50 drivers.

**DUTIES OF DRIVERS EMPLOYED BY CONTRACTED PARTIES**

1. The driver shall deal with children in a firm, fair, and friendly manner. Any misconduct of pupils shall be reported to the principal of the school to which the pupil belongs. The driver does not have the authority to suspend a pupil from transportation privileges.
2. The driver shall obey all state and local traffic regulations.
3. Each driver shall be responsible for cleaning the bus a minimum of one time per school day.
4. Drivers shall not use profanity, tobacco, drugs, intoxicating beverages, or vaping devices/electronic cigarettes when transporting pupils.
5. It is the duty of all drivers to promote safe habits.
6. Drivers shall participate in all mandated driver training programs including the annual instruction required by the State for maintaining their CDL and any training required by Knox County Schools in order to be included on the Driver Eligibility Roster.
7. Drivers shall maintain a consistent time schedule, never early, seldom late.
8. Drivers shall execute a pre-operations check of their vehicle before morning and afternoon runs and ensure all passengers have safely exited after each run.
9. Drivers shall have at least an elementary knowledge of first aid. The driver's employer is responsible for first aid training.
10. The responsibility for determining if weather or other conditions warrant the preemptive or early closure of schools belongs to the Director of Schools. The responsibility for determining if a road is passable belongs to the driver since they bear responsibility for the safety of the children on their route.
11. The driver shall maintain satisfactory working relationships with all school personnel.
12. The driver shall permit only those students assigned to their bus to ride during the regular contracted route with the following exceptions:
  - Bus assistants approved by the Transportation Department or a building level administrator;
  - Children of a bus driver meeting criteria stipulated in the Knox County Schools School Bus Handbook
13. The contractor or their employees shall not recommend, recruit or otherwise solicit student participation in any non-school sponsored activity.
14. The contractor or their employees shall adhere to all items included in the Transportation Handbook maintained by the Transportation Department.

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15. All school buses operated on behalf of Knox County Schools shall post a notice in a conspicuous place on each school bus in operation to notify others that no person shall enter onto school buses except for those authorized pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-2008.<sup>7</sup>

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Legal References:

- 1. T.C.A. § 49-6-2101-2113; TRR/MS § 0520-1-5-01.
- 2. T.C.A. § 55-10-107.
- 3. T.C.A. § 55-10-107.
- 4. T.C.A. § 49-6-2114.
- 5. T.C.A. § 49-6-2107.
- 6. TDOS § 1340-3-3.
- 7. T.C.A. § 49-6-2008(e).

Approved as to Legal Form  
By Knox County Law Director 1/17/2025  
*/Gary T. Dupler/Deputy Law Director*