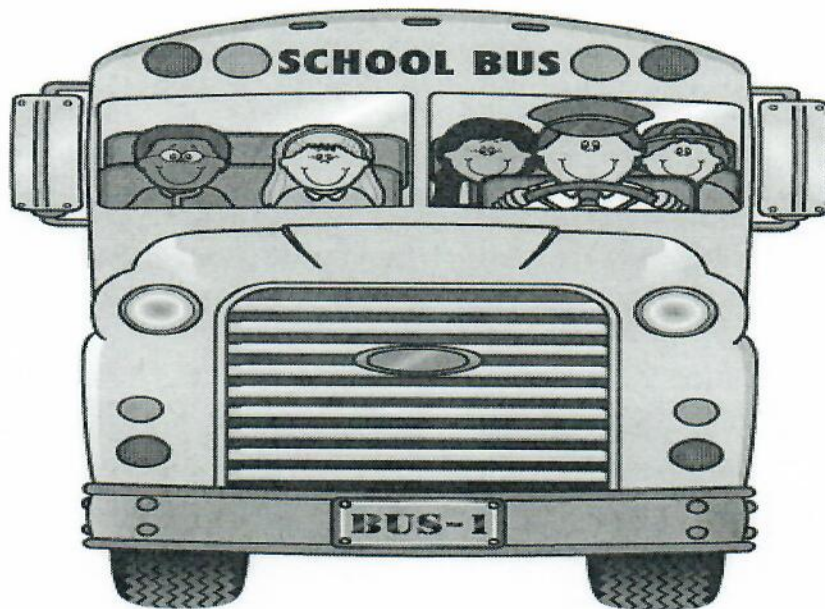


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Transportation Safety Plan For School Personnel

Introduction:

This Transportation Safety Plan contains procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of pupils and is in compliance with Education Code Section 39831.3. Pursuant to the code section, a copy of the Transportation Safety Plan shall be kept at each school site served by the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency (MPTA) and made available upon request to the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

Home-to-School Transportation Provider:

The Marin Pupil Transportation Agency is a public, Joint Powers Agency formed by the following ten (10) member school districts:

Kentfield Elementary School District
Larkspur – Corte Madera Elementary School District
Mill Valley Elementary School District
Reed Union School District
Ross Elementary School District
Ross Valley Elementary School District
San Rafael Elementary School District
San Rafael High School District
Sausalito – Marin City Elementary School District
Tamalpais Union High School District

Our mission is to provide safe, efficient, special education school bus transportation service for students living in one of the ten (10) member school districts listed above. The following information is intended to assist school personnel in their task of providing safe transportation.

Student Instruction:

All students who are transported in a school bus or school pupil activity bus (SPAB) shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety (Education Code 38048). Students shall receive a packet of school, transportation safety and ridership information at least once when they are enrolled in school. Most schools continue to include this same information in the back-to-school packet annually for students. Most of this same information is presented below so school personnel may include this information in their daily contact with students; may utilize this in answering questions for students or the public; or teachers may utilize this information in developing instructional lessons for school transportation safety.

1. Each school year, the School District Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills. Each student who receives home-to-school transportation in a school bus shall be required to receive this instruction (Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 14102).

2. At least once each school year, all students in grades pre-Kindergarten through 8 who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to (Education Code 39831.5):

- a. Proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting across the street by the school bus driver.
- b. How to safely cross the street, highway, or private road.
- c. Instruction in the use of passenger restraint systems.
- d. Proper passenger conduct.
- e. Bus evacuation.
- f. Location of emergency equipment.

As part of this instruction, students shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers sitting next to an emergency exit.

3. Each time instruction is given, the following information shall be documented:

- a. School district name.
- b. School name and location.
- c. Date of instruction.
- d. Name(s) of supervising adults.
- e. Number of students participating.
- f. Grade levels of students.
- g. Subjects covered in instruction.
- h. Amount of time taken for instruction.
- i. School bus driver's name.
- j. Bus number.
- k. Additional remarks.

This documentation shall be kept on file at the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency's office (or the bus company under contract to the MPTA), for one (1) year and shall be available for inspection by the California Highway Patrol.

Bus Routes:

Special education home-to-school bus routes are mailed to parents/guardians several days prior to the start of school. Route schedules may change and parents are notified of schedule changes as necessary. Any question regarding bus schedules should be directed to the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency. All students have a designated school bus stop. Parents must notify the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency in advance if they want their child to be taken to or picked up from a bus stop which is different from their regular bus stop. Students will be taken to their regular bus stop, or returned to school, unless proper advance notification is given to the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency.

Students are urged to get to the bus stop at least five (5) minutes prior to the posted stop time. Bus stop times may change or vary depending on ridership changes. The Marin Pupil Transportation Agency will notify parents of any changes.

Students must remain orderly at the bus stop. They must remain at least six (6) feet back of the main traveled portion of the roadway and should be visible to the driver. Students must be respectful of property owners where the bus stop is located and must keep their voices down and keep off private property.

Determining if a Pupil Requires an Escort:

The school bus driver, in conjunction with the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency, and the School, shall determine if an escort is required at a particular bus stop in compliance with Section 22112 of the California Vehicle Code.

An escort is defined as a "red light crossover" escorting a student across the street from the direction the school bus is traveling. Every bus stop requiring escort will be clearly marked on the bus route sheet.

Getting Ready for the School Bus:

- a. Place all materials you are taking to school in your backpack.
- b. Keep the backpack closed until you reach school.
- c. Always wear something light or bright to make sure you will be seen by the school bus driver.
- d. Secure loose drawstrings and other objects that might get caught in the handrail or door of the school bus.

- e. Leave home so you are at your bus stop five (5) minutes before your school bus is scheduled to arrive.

Clothing Hazards:

In the past few years, there have been several serious student injuries or fatalities in other states due to clothing or backpacks that have drawstrings. The drawstrings have gotten caught in handrails on the school bus, without the driver's knowledge. Please inspect your children's clothing or backpacks to ensure there are no drawstrings or other hanging objects that could get caught in the handrail or the door of the school bus.

Walking to and from School Bus Stops:

Students should be very careful when walking to and from school bus stops. Parents/guardians should accompany young children to the bus stop and assist in keeping order while waiting for the school bus. Children should be instructed to keep on sidewalks or on the shoulder of the road, and far away from the main traveled portion of the roadway.

Children should pay close attention to traffic, weather conditions, and visibility conditions. Visible clothing, or clothing and backpacks with reflective material, should be worn at all times.

Children should remain orderly at all times and refrain from boisterous conduct or horseplay while walking to and from the school bus stop. Children should not engage in conversation with strangers or accept rides from passing motorists. When walking to or from a school bus stop, children should face traffic.

Walking on the Road Where No Sidewalks are Available:

- a. If there is no sidewalk, stay out of the actual road if at all possible.
- b. If you MUST walk in the roadway:
 - 1. Face traffic.
 - 2. Stay as close to the edge of the roadway as possible.
 - 3. Walk single file.

General Rules of Conduct at School Bus Loading Zones:

Students should wait in an orderly fashion while at the school bus stop in the morning. They should be at the bus stop at least five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled stop time. Students should be at least six (6) feet back from the main traveled portion of the roadway and visible to the school bus driver. Pushing, shoving, or horseplay are not allowed at the school bus stop.

Students should be mindful of the bus stop location. Many are in driveways and on private property. Students are not allowed to throw rocks or other objects, play around, cause excessive noise, touch or tamper with private property or vehicles nearby.

Once the school bus arrives, students shall wait for the school bus driver to come to a complete stop and the door of the bus to open **before** they begin to move forward to the school bus. Students should board the school bus one-at-a-time, using the available hand rails, and move quickly to an open seat.

If a student drops papers or other objects while boarding the school bus, he/she should get the attention of the school bus driver. Students should be instructed **NEVER TO GO NEAR THE SCHOOL BUS TO RETREIVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS** as the school bus driver may not be able to see a student in one of these locations.

In the afternoon, students should wait at school according to established pre-bus-loading procedure at the school. Teachers or aides on duty at the bus loading area shall maintain order over students, keep the students well away from the location where school buses pull up. Teachers or aides should also direct orderly release or escort the students to their school bus.

Teachers or aides on duty must remain at the bus loading zone until all school buses have departed. School bus drivers may need their help for various matters or to take students back to the school office. On duty teachers and aides should ensure that no students get close to the school buses, touch them, or go under, in front of, or behind a school bus.

When students depart from school on the school bus and they are arriving at their school bus stop, they must remain seated until the school bus comes to a complete stop, the brakes are set, and the door is open before they stand up to exit the school bus. Students shall have all of their clothes and supplies together in preparation for their school bus stop.

Students should use handrails when leaving the school bus and shall walk away from the school bus to the shoulder of the roadway, or sidewalk and walk directly home. If a student drops papers or other objects while he/she is leaving the school bus, they must get the attention of the school bus driver. Students should **NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE SCHOOL BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS** as the school bus driver may not be able to see a student in one of these locations.

School Bus Danger Zones:

The areas closest to the perimeter of the school bus are called the danger zones. Students are directed to be no closer than twelve (12) feet to the school bus, except when loading and unloading. The vast majority of school bus accidents and injury to students occur outside of the school bus in this danger zone.

If a student drops papers, lunch boxes, or other objects while loading or unloading from the school bus, the student must get the attention of the school bus driver. Students should **NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE SCHOOL BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS** as the school bus driver may not be able to see a student in one of these locations.

Special note: At the end of this document is a diagram of the Danger Zones around a school bus. Please use this diagram as part of the students instruction on school bus riding safety.

Special Education Transportation Guidelines:

What special needs equipment might be transported on a school bus?

Wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, child safety-seats (Star Vests or car seats), and safety vests to name a few. Other equipment that may be required with the student transportation is oxygen, battery packs, medical equipment, and service animals.

Medical or Health Issues:

As schools are serving more students with disabilities who have severe medical or health conditions, the transportation staff is finding it necessary to provide both routine and emergency health care to students during transportation. Additionally, transportation staff may be exposed to dangerous infectious or communicable diseases. Training regarding medical or health issues can reasonably be divided into two (2) categories: precautionary handling, and care and intervention.

Precautionary Handling:

All transportation staff, including school bus drivers, attendants, mechanics, and service personnel such as washing and cleaning staff, should be trained in “universal precautions” relative to the handling and exposure to contagious and communicable disease (including available immunizations).

Transporting Students in Safety Vests, Car Seats, and Support Systems:

Some students benefit from using a safety vest, Star Vest, or car seat while being transported in a school bus. Usually when a student needs extra support, a safety vest or car seat may be used. This is beneficial when a student needs additional physical or behavioral support. Please consult with transportation and IEP team if requesting the use of a safety vest or car seat.

Safe Transportation of Students in Wheelchairs or Other Mobility Assistance Devices:

- a. When a student is transported in a wheelchair, a four-point tie down is required on the school bus.
- b. Forward facing wheelchairs shall have a head rest or proper head/neck support to prevent “whiplash” injuries.
- c. All lap belts must have an auto-type buckle, not Velcro-type fasteners and **must** be permanently attached to the wheelchair frame.
- d. Lap trays should remain in place during transportation.
- e. All batteries must be in a sealed leak-proof container attached to the wheelchair.
- f. Every wheelchair must be equipped with footrest and appropriate straps as needed.
- g. The wheelchair should be the appropriate size for the height and weight of the student. If questions arise, please consult with the physical therapist who serves the student.
- h. Each wheelchair is to be inspected prior to transporting to avoid the possibility of denied transportation.

Special Equipment Use and Operation:

There is a wide variety of equipment to accommodate students with disabilities that is required to be part of the transportation vehicle’s environment. It is necessary for the transportation staff to be familiar with the design and operating procedure for this special equipment, as well as knowing how to conduct equipment inspection and make simple “field adjustments” during breakdowns. Some examples are:

- a. Power lifts or ramps.
- b. Emergency escape exits including doors, windows, and roof hatches.
- c. Required emergency equipment.

- d. Power cutoff switch.
- e. Emergency communications system on the school bus (two-way radio).
- f. Mobile seating device, including trays and accessories, securement system hardware and occupant securement system.
- g. Adaptive and assistive devices used to support or secure students, mobility aids, special belts, and harnesses and devices (such as special crutches, braces, or wheelchairs, including assistive technology devices).
- h. Service animals cannot be transported without proper documentation and prior notice. Policies and procedures need to be followed prior to transport.
- i. Any required special equipment provided by the school district, school, parent or guardian shall accompany students with disabilities for transportation on the school bus.

Additional Instructions for Special Needs Students:

- a. School bus drivers shall pick-up/drop-off at designated stops.
- b. Loading and unloading at school sites will be conducted utilizing the same procedures as for home-to-school special needs students who are must-be-met.
- c. For the safety and security of the students, students designated as must-be-met must be escorted **to and from the school bus door** by the parent/guardian or school staff.
- d. The school bus driver shall not activate the flashing red light system where a pupil requires physical assistance from the school bus driver or authorized attendant to board or leave the school bus, providing the assistance extends the length of time the school bus is stopped beyond the time required to load or unload a pupil that does not require physical assistance.
- e. Special needs student accountability and observation includes reporting evidence of neglect or abuse.

Safe Riding Practices:

In compliance with Education Code Section 39831.5, students annually receive instruction on proper loading and unloading procedures including red-light escorting by the school bus driver, proper passenger conduct, bus evacuation and location of emergency exits and emergency conditions. Instruction may also include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

In addition, students annually receive instruction on the use of proper restraint systems, including the following: Proper fastening and release of the passenger restraint system, acceptable placement of passenger restraint systems on pupils, times at which the passenger restraint system should be fastened and released, and acceptable placement of the passenger restraint system when not in use.

Prior to departure on any school activity trip, all pupils riding on a school bus or school pupil activity bus (SPAB) shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to, location of emergency exits, and location and use of emergency equipment.

In addition to the expectations spelled out to students in the above, school bus drivers must orient students to rules and expectations their first days of each school year. Rules are posted in the school buses. Consequences for poor behavior and rewards for good behavior are discussed. Classroom behavior is expected on all school buses. Students must remain seated at all times, must keep all body parts inside the windows of the school bus, and must not eat, drink, or smoke on the school bus. Additionally, students must keep noise down, are not allowed to “roughhouse” on the school bus, and must follow all directions of the school bus driver.

Students must remain quiet on the school bus at railroad crossings.

Red Light Crossing Escort Procedures:

The Marin Pupil Transportation Agency normally does not establish red light crossing bus stops. However, if a student needs to cross the road and the bus stop is designated as an escorted crossing, the school bus driver sets the parking brake, secures the bus, checks traffic, turns on the red lights, takes the vehicle key, opens the door and exits the school bus with a hand held stop sign to escort the student across the road.

The student must follow all of the directions of the school bus driver, and not cross the road until the school bus driver verbally tells the student to proceed. **This crossing maneuver is considered most dangerous and students must be aware, alert, and follow the directions of the school bus driver.**

Activity Trips:

The Marin Pupil Transportation Agency does not coordinate or provide Activity Trips. However, the following general guidance is provided for school staff informational purposes only.

When planning an activity trip or field trip, the school has several options. They may use a School Bus, School Pupil Activity Bus (SPAB), operated by a private charter company, Public Transit Bus, or Parent-Owned Vehicles.

School Bus:

California School Buses and school bus drivers are the most highly regulated student transportation vehicles and drivers. On any school activity trip, whether on a school bus or not, the teacher shall have a roster of all students on the trip, an itinerary of the trip and should carry a supplemental first aid kit. Teachers or coaches should plan all stops in conjunction with the transportation provider and should not allow students to eat or drink on the school bus or car.

SPAB Buses:

School Pupil Activity Buses are owned and operated by a private charter carrier (for hire charter bus operator). SPAB buses need to be certified by a CHP Motor Carrier Inspector within the past thirteen (13) months and must have a certificate on board that is signed and dated by the Inspector. The bus driver must also have received some special training and must have at least a Class B California driver's license and a Special Drivers Certificate valid for driving a SPAB bus. When booking a SPAB bus, you must specify such and a School Official shall inspect the bus and the driver to make sure they meet all of the certification and legal requirements prior to allowing students to board the bus.

Public Transit Buses:

If the students are going to use a Public Transit bus for their activity trip, the school must call the transit agency prior to the trip and ensure they are prepared for the group and make sure they understand the requirements for riding Public Transit Buses for School Students.

Parent-Owned Vehicles:

The use of Parent-Owned Vehicles for activity trips shall be strictly adhered to School District Policy. All parents shall show proof of appropriate insurance. In no case shall a vehicle be used that is designed for more than nine (9) passengers and the driver and or the number of passengers in the vehicle exceed the number of seat belts. Students who are required by law to be secured in a child passenger restraint system is any child weighing less than sixty (60) pounds or under the age of six (6). These students are to be in the rear seats unless the rear seats are already occupied by others that meet the same requirements, there are no rear forward facing seats, or the restraint system cannot properly be installed.

Bus Safety:

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to two hundred (200) feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for activity trips shall have the authority to

discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility (Vehicle Code 34501.6).

School buses and school pupil activity buses (SPAB) also shall not be operated whenever the number of passengers exceeds the bus seating capacity, except when necessary in emergency situations which require that students be moved immediately to ensure their safety.

The Marin Pupil Transportation Agency may place a notice at school bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The school bus driver or other school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a school bus without prior authorization and his intent is to commit a crime (Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 1256.5).

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one (1) fire extinguisher located in the school bus driver's compartment which meets the standards specified in law (Education Code 38056).

The Marin Pupil Transportation Agency shall review all investigations of school bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

Notifications:

The School District Superintendent or designee shall provide written safety information to the parents/guardians of all students in grades pre-Kindergarten through 8 who have not been transported in a school bus or school pupil activity bus (SPAB). This information shall be provided upon registration and shall include the following (Education Code 38048).

- a. A list of school bus stops near each student's home.
- b. General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones.
- c. Red light crossing instructions.
- d. School bus danger zones.
- e. Safety while walking to and from school bus stops.

Special Situations or Circumstances:

If you encounter a student transportation safety situation that is not covered in this plan or seems unique, please contact the Marin Pupil Transportation Agency at (415) 258-8511 for direction, or the School Pupil Safety Officer of the California Highway Patrol – Marin County Office at (415) 924-1100 for direction.

DANGER ZONES

DANGER FROM PASSING CARS

