SD42 PROCEDURE 5401

DISTRICT-OWNED BUSES AND PASSENGER VEHICLES USED TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish requirements for the safe operation, maintenance, and use of district-owned buses and passenger vehicles used to transport students to and from school and school-related activities.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all district-owned buses, minibuses, vans, and other district-owned passenger vehicles used to transport students for educational, extracurricular, athletic, cultural, or school-sponsored purposes.

DEFINITIONS

Authorized Driver
An individual who has been approved by the Principal to operate a district-owned vehicle.

District-Owned Bus
A district-owned vehicle with a seating capacity of more than ten persons, including the driver.

District-Owned Passenger Vehicle
A district-owned van, minibus, or other passenger vehicle used to transport students.

School-Related Activity
Any activity approved by the Principal that is connected to the educational program or operation of the school district.

PROCEDURES

General

District-owned buses and passenger vehicles shall be used primarily to transport students to and from school and school-related activities.

District-owned vehicles may be used for other approved district purposes with authorization from the Superintendent of Schools or designate.

Personal use of district-owned vehicles is prohibited.

Driver Authorization

Only authorized drivers may operate district-owned buses and passenger vehicles.

Prior to being authorized, a driver must:

- possess a valid British Columbia driver's licence appropriate for the class of vehicle being operated;
- provide a current driver's abstract acceptable to the District;
- demonstrate the knowledge, experience, and ability required to safely operate the vehicle;
- complete any orientation or training required by the District; and
- comply with all licensing, medical, and insurance requirements established by law.

Authorized drivers shall immediately report any licence suspension, driving prohibition, medical restriction, or other circumstance that may affect their ability to safely operate a vehicle.

The Principal may suspend or revoke authorization to operate a district-owned vehicle at any time.

Vehicle Licensing and Insurance

All district-owned buses used to transport students shall possess a valid school bus permit where required by law.

All vehicles shall be licensed, insured, and operated in accordance with applicable legislation and district requirements.

Appropriate insurance coverage shall be maintained on all district-owned vehicles through the District's fleet insurance program.

Vehicle Maintenance and Safety

The Principal shall establish maintenance schedules and inspection requirements for district-owned vehicles.

Vehicles shall be maintained in a safe operating condition and comply with applicable safety standards.

Any driver who identifies a mechanical defect or safety concern shall immediately report the concern and shall not operate the vehicle if doing so may compromise safety.

Vehicles determined to be unsafe shall be removed from service until repairs have been completed.

For a 15-passenger van to be considered a school bus, all of the following requirements must be met:

- school bus permit (issued by the Motor Vehicle Branch);
- school bus exterior signage;
- secured first aid kit – Level 1;
- secured fire extinguisher;
- 2 medium-size triangle reflectors; and
- driver must have a valid class 4 license.

Approval of Student Transportation

Transportation using a district-owned vehicle must be approved by the Principal or designated administrator responsible for the activity.

The Principal shall designate an employee to assume overall responsibility for the transportation arrangements, supervision of students, and coordination of the activity. If no employee is designated, the Principal assumes these responsibilities. The trip supervisor and the driver may be different people, when that is the case, the supervisor remains responsible for student supervision.

The supervising employee shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- transportation arrangements are appropriate for the activity;
- the number of passengers does not exceed the legal seating capacity of the vehicle;
- There is a seat belt for each person in the vehicle;
- All children under 12 years of age ride in the back seats;
- Booster seats are used for any child under 1.45 meters (4’9”) in height or until their 9th birthday;
- students are adequately supervised;
- emergency contact information is available; and
- any special safety requirements associated with the activity are addressed.

Before transportation occurs, the supervising employee shall ensure that any parent/guardian consent required under Administrative Procedure 8901.1 Level 1 Field Trips (Including Extra-Curricular Activities) and 8901.2 Level 2 Field Trips (Including Extra-Curricular Activities) has been obtained.

A passenger manifest, including applicable emergency contact and relevant medical information, shall be maintained at the school or designated District location and carried by the supervising employee during the trip.

Safe Operation

Each vehicle shall undergo inspections at the intervals required by legislation, the applicable inspection program, the manufacturer, and District requirements. Inspection, maintenance, repair, and defect records shall be retained in accordance with the District's records retention requirements.

Before each trip, the driver shall complete and document the pre-trip inspection required for the class and type of vehicle. The vehicle shall not be operated if the inspection identifies a condition that may affect its safe operation.

Drivers shall comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws and regulations.

Drivers shall operate district-owned vehicles in a safe and prudent manner and shall exercise reasonable care and attention at all times.

Occupants shall use seat belts and other required safety restraints in accordance with applicable legislation.

Drivers shall ensure that all equipment, luggage, supplies, and materials are properly secured before travel.

The use of handheld electronic devices while operating a vehicle is prohibited except as permitted by law.

Drivers shall not operate a vehicle when impaired by alcohol, drugs, fatigue, illness, medication, or any other condition that could affect safe operation.

Drivers have the authority to discontinue or delay travel when road, weather, vehicle, or other safety conditions warrant.

Vehicles shall carry the emergency and safety equipment required by legislation and district standards. Required equipment shall be secured, accessible, inspected regularly, and replaced when used, damaged, expired, or otherwise unserviceable.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and respectful manner that aligns with the Policy 9100 Student Code of Conduct and the school's Code of Conduct while travelling in a district-owned vehicle.

The supervising employee and driver share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment during transportation.

Unsafe conduct may result in disciplinary action or the suspension of transportation privileges.

Accidents, Incidents, and Emergencies

Any accident, collision, injury, mechanical breakdown, or significant incident involving a district-owned vehicle shall be reported immediately to the appropriate District administrator.

Drivers shall follow district emergency procedures and cooperate with emergency responders and insurers as required.

The district may require a review of the incident before the vehicle or driver resumes transportation duties.

Security and Storage

Vehicles shall be secured when unattended.

Vehicle keys shall be safeguarded and accessed only by authorized individuals.

District-owned vehicles shall be stored at designated locations when not in use unless otherwise authorized.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent is responsible for the overall administration of this procedure and may establish additional operational requirements as necessary.

Principals and Supervisors

Principals and Supervisors are responsible for appropriate insurance coverage and maintenance of the vehicles, approving transportation activities, ensuring appropriate supervision, and verifying compliance with this procedure.

Authorized Drivers

Authorized drivers are responsible for the safe operation of district-owned vehicles and compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and district requirements.

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