

## **CLASSIFIED STAFF BUS DRIVING REQUIREMENTS**

*Policy Code:* **6301**

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The board recognizes that providing school bus services for students is a fundamental responsibility of a public school system. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Watauga County Schools system is able to meet this responsibility even in the absence of sufficient personnel hired solely as bus drivers.

Consistent with that purpose, all full-time school-based classified staff medically qualified to drive a school bus will have the obligation to do so, as specified in this policy, for the first fifteen years of employment with the Watauga County Schools. School-based classified personnel that have fulfilled this obligation will have the option to continue driving or be excused from these responsibilities.

All school-based classified staff except school secretaries, tutors, cafeteria managers, and extended learning center staff; those age 65 or over; and those employed on or before August 1, 1994, are required to obtain and maintain a CDL Driver's License and School Bus Driver pocket card as a condition of employment. In order to continue employment, required school site-based classified employees who are employed without the required CDL must enroll in the next available bus driver training class and complete all requirements to obtain the required license. The employment of school-based classified staff that do not enroll in the next available class and or do not complete all the requirements for the CDL license will be immediately terminated unless there is a valid reason approved by the principal.

Required school-based classified staff that have their CDL License or their School Bus Drivers pocket card revoked after the school year begins will be given until the beginning of the next school year to obtain the license and or have the pocket card renewed. Required school-based classified staff who fail to re-obtain the license and or have the pocket card renewed by the beginning of the next school year will not be employed for that school year.

Required school site-based classified staff with a temporary medical condition diagnosed by a licensed physician which medically prevents the employee from driving a school bus with reasonable accommodation will be given until the beginning of the next school year to resolve their medical condition. In the event that a required school-based classified employee becomes incapable of driving a school bus with reasonable accommodation due to a permanent medical condition diagnosed by a licensed physician, the employee will be excused from driving responsibilities. "Reasonable accommodation" under this policy does not include providing a substitute bus driver for an indefinite period of time.

The "Physician Certification of Disability" form is to be submitted to the Human Resources Director no later than July 1 of each year by any employee who believes that they are unable to drive a school bus due to a temporary or permanent medical condition. The Human Resources Director reserves the right to request a second physician evaluation at the Board of Education's expense. All claims of disability will be reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently at the discretion of the Human Resources Director.

Required school-based classified staff will be expected to drive regular bus routes, substitute for regular bus driver absences, and drive buses for field trips. Required classified staff will be assigned to drive on a rotation basis. Principals will be responsible for developing a fair and equitable rotation that is appropriate for the school and ensuring that all required classified staff are utilized in a fair and equitable rotation manner unless an employee has a valid reason not to be included in the rotation that has been approved by the Human Resources Director.

Teacher assistants assigned to a classroom(s) will not be required to drive for field trips of classrooms they are not assigned to unless there is an emergency that would cause the other classroom to lose the field trip.

The employment of required school-based classified staff who refuse or who are not willing to drive for regular bus driver absences or field trips will be immediately terminated unless a valid reason has been submitted to and approved by the principal.

Principals will encourage regular bus drivers to notify the school if they plan to be absent for a morning route by the afternoon prior to the absence and by 12:00 p.m. if they plan to be absent for an afternoon route unless an emergency arises.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -239, -240, -242, -245; G.S. 20-218

Cross References: Safety and Student Transportation Services (policy 6305), School Bus Idling (policy 6306), Organization of Student Transportation Services (policy 6310), Drivers (policy 6315), Extracurricular and Non-Instructional Duties (policy 7405)

Adopted: March 14, 2005 as policy 3.02.35

Revised: December 10, 2007; April 11, 2016