

Safety is of paramount concern in the transportation of students and others. Consistent with the safety goals of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) , all drivers involved in transporting students or operating any vehicle in the course of carrying out their employment duties must comply with the following board requirements, as applicable.

**A. SCHOOL BUS AND ACTIVITY BUS DRIVERS**

School bus and activity bus drivers must:

1. possess required licenses and all other qualifications required by law;
2. undergo and follow all training required by law governing school bus and activity bus passenger safety and comply with the safety practices set out in policy 6305, Safety and Student Transportation Services;
3. not operate a school or activity bus on a public street, highway, or public vehicular area while using a mobile telephone or related technology while the bus is in motion, unless such use is for the sole purpose of communicating in an emergency situation;
4. use the North Carolina crossing signals required by the State Board of Education to communicate to students when it is safe to cross the street to board the bus and when it is safe to cross the street after exiting the bus;
5. report to the principal any misconduct that is in violation of any of the student behavior policies in the 4300 series or school rules;
6. use reasonable judgment in the operation of the buses;
7. make reasonable efforts to maintain good order of the students being transported;
8. not permit any person to ride who is not assigned to the bus or has not received express permission of the principal or other designated official;
9. promptly report to the principal or other designated official any defect or other concern regarding the safety of the school bus, activity bus, or other vehicle operated by the school system;
10. report to the principal or other designated official by the next workday any moving violation citations received while operating any motor vehicle, whether on or off duty;
11. promptly report to the principal or other designated official all accidents that

occurred while driving a school vehicle; and

12. comply with the requirements of policy 7241, Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators.

## **B. OTHER DRIVERS**

Other drivers who transport students, including volunteer drivers, and drivers who operate a vehicle for other purposes in the course of carrying out their employment duties, must:

1. possess required licenses and all other qualifications required by law;
2. be approved to transport students by the school principal and/or Human Resources office based on a background check that includes the driving record;
3. be at least 21 years of age;
4. report to the principal by the next school day any moving violation citations received while operating any motor vehicle, whether on or off duty; and
5. carry insurance if operating a privately owned vehicle.

## **C. VEHICLES**

The only vehicles that may be used by a school system employee to transport students are school buses, activity buses, and a car or minivan owned by the Watauga County Schools or rented through a rental company approved by the Finance Office. No employee will transport students in a personal vehicle and no employee or volunteer driver will transport students in a 12-15 passenger van.

No more than five students will be transported by a school system employee or volunteer in any one vehicle other than a school bus or activity bus.

The superintendent or designee shall make copies of this policy and other related policies available to drivers.

Legal References: G.S. 20-7(f)(2), -137.4, -218; 115C-47(25a), -241, -242, -244 to -246, -248, -251, -317.1; 16 N.C.A.C. 6B .0111; State Board of Education Policy TRAN-010; *North Carolina School Bus Driver Handout*, Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, available at <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-licenses/new-drivers/Documents/school-bus-handbook.pdf>

Cross References: Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Safety and Student Transportation Services (policy 6305), Student Transportation Services (6320), Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators (policy 7241), Insurance (policy 8340)

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Replaces: 5.04.30, Student Transportation by School System Employees