

OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, OVERSIGHT AND RECOVERY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
March 20-21, 2014

OFFICE OF SAFE AND ORDERLY SCHOOLS

06. Approval to revise the Mississippi Pupil Transportation Handbook
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments)

Executive Summary

The Mississippi Pupil Transportation Handbook is revised as the results of Senate Bill 2472 (Nathan's Law) signed into law July 1, 2011. The Handbook is used by school bus drivers in Mississippi, school bus driver trainers in Mississippi, and the Mississippi Department of Education.

After receiving the comments during the Administrative Procedures Act process, there were a few changes made to the Handbook. The changes were made for clarity to the Handbook.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

MISSISSIPPI

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK



Mississippi Department of Education

Jackson, Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK



Prepared by the
Division of Pupil Transportation

Approved by
MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 16, 1993
Revised July 2013
Revised February 2014

Mississippi Department of Education
Jackson, Mississippi

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint school bus drivers, students, school superintendents, school principals, and parents with their responsibilities and to encourage their acceptance of these responsibilities to assure a safer and more economical transportation program.

The safety of every pupil is extremely important. School administrators and school bus drivers must do everything possible to ensure safe operation of the school buses. Good attitudes, skills and judgment are necessary for the safety and welfare of the children. A thorough knowledge of this book will help to provide a better transportation program for the schools of the state.

Accidents often occur as a result of carelessness or indifference. **MOST SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS ARE DUE TO HUMAN FAILURE.**

One of the greatest hazards for pupils is in the loading zones. Extreme caution must be exercised to see that children load and unload safely on routes as well as at school.

This handbook is not intended to present in detail every responsibility of the bus driver. However, it does provide valuable information which, if learned and applied, will ensure to a great extent the safety of the child and protection of the bus.

The Mississippi Pupil Transportation Handbook is dedicated to the conscientious, capable and efficient school bus drivers of Mississippi who transport school children to and from school daily.

**MISSISSIPPI
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK**

**LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Section 37-41-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, states in part:

The Mississippi Board of Education is authorized, empowered and directed to promulgate rules and regulations for:

- (a) Setting standards for public school bus routes;
- (b) Approving or disapproving plans for public school bus routes;
- (c) Setting standards for public school buses;
- (d) Setting standards for public school bus drivers;
- (e) Formulating procedures for selecting public school bus drivers;
- (f) Formulating courses of training for public school bus drivers and mechanics and assist in administering and financing such courses;
- (g) Providing operation procedure for public school buses to insure safety of students;
- (h) Furnishing consultative supervision for the operation of county school bus garages, and approving plans for such garages and the proposed expenditure of transportation funds therefore;
- (i) Formulating specification for use in purchasing public school buses; getting bids on public school buses, equipment and supplies; and fixing prices based upon said bids which school districts may not exceed in purchasing said equipment;
- (j) Formulating specifications for use by school districts in purchasing used school buses;
- (k) Providing a system of records and reports for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Sections 37-41-1 to 37-41-51, and providing the county superintendent and the superintendent of municipal separate school districts with added territory with a sufficient supply of report forms;
- (l) Conduct upon said buses; and
- (m) The method by which, and the circumstances in which, any individual who is not a student scheduled to be a passenger upon that particular bus, a member of the public school administration or faculty, or a law enforcement official may obtain entry upon said buses.

All rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the Mississippi Board of Education relating to school bus drivers shall also be applicable to drivers of privately-owned buses transporting public school children.

Pupil transportation rules and regulations adopted by the Mississippi Board of Education are equivalent to **LAWS**.

CARE OF THE STUDENT IS THE BUS DRIVER'S GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. CARE OF THE BUS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SAFETY OF THE STUDENT. CARE OF THE STUDENT AND CARE OF THE BUS ARE SO CLOSELY RELATED THAT THE BUS DRIVER SHOULD EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO OPERATE HIS/HER BUS IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD ASSURE SAFETY OF THE STUDENT AND ECONOMICAL OPERATION OF THE BUS.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

Physical, Mental and Moral Requirements

1. A driver must have at least 20/40 visual acuity in each eye.
2. It is recommended that each driver have a vision test for glaucoma, depth perception, and presence of cataracts.
3. A driver must have a recent physical examination that includes but is not limited to: tests for tuberculosis, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

A doctor or physical therapist may be requested to give an opinion as to whether or not an applicant is physically qualified to perform the work of a school bus driver based on state and federal regulations.

4. All drivers must consent to and pass a pre-employment drug screening and be placed in a pool for random drug screening.
5. A bus driver must have the normal use of both arms, both hands, both legs, and both feet.
6. A bus driver must have sufficient physical strength to drive a school bus.
7. A bus driver shall be a person of good moral character.

8. A bus driver shall be emotionally stable.
9. A driver's hearing shall not be impaired to the extent that it would interfere with the safe operation of a school bus.
10. A bus driver must pass a pre-employment agility test administered as part of the Mississippi Department of Education bus driver training.
11. A driver must have an acceptable driving record with no convictions deemed disqualifying under the Mississippi Commercial Drivers License Law, Section 63-1-73 through 63-1-90, Mississippi Code as amended.

Age Limits

A school bus driver must be a least 18 years of age.

License and Certificate

1. A school bus driver shall have a valid Class A, B or C Commercial Driver's License with a "P" and "S" endorsement.
2. A school bus driver shall have a valid school bus driver's certificate issued by an instructor approved by the Mississippi Department of Education.

"A minimum of eight (8) hours in a regular school bus driver training course approved by the Mississippi Board of Education is one of the requirements for receiving a certification card which is valid for no more than two (2) years."

Bus drivers' that have a chargeable accident during the school year may be required to attend a regular bus school the following summer, regardless of the validity of their certification card. This requirement is left to the discretion of the local school district and the Mississippi Department of Education, Division of Pupil Transportation officials.

3. Bus drivers may be required to have a valid "Medical Card."

Driver Attitude

1. A bus driver should be cheerful, confident, serious minded, and considerate of others.
2. A bus driver should not quarrel with students.
3. A bus driver should be friendly, fair, and firm.
4. A bus driver should control his/her temper at all times.
5. A bus driver should display a positive attitude.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Preventive maintenance may be defined as maintaining a vehicle in a safe and economical operating condition through a systematic inspection and service plan.

The bus driver has the responsibility in the preventive maintenance program. The bus driver is on the road with the vehicle for several hours each day and is in the position to observe the bus' performance under all conditions. The bus driver should learn to recognize defects and immediately report the symptoms to the maintenance department or to appropriate school officials. **Remember, defects cannot be repaired if they are not reported.**

Daily Inspection

The following daily bus inspection shall be made before starting on the morning run:

1. Check the oil, water, battery, and belts before starting the engine.
2. Start the engine and make an inside check (instrument panel, brakes, windshield, wipers, stop arm, crossing control arm, horn, mirrors, turn signals, etc.).
3. Check tires and wheels.
4. Check all lights.
5. Clean glass and light lenses as needed.
6. Check emergency door and buzzer and close door securely.
7. Check exhaust system.

While the walk around safety check is being made, the engine may idle no more than 3-5 minutes. This should allow sufficient time for the engine to warm up. Refrain from revving a cold engine. Considerable damage may occur to bearings and cylinder.

The bus driver shall report promptly in writing any defects that may affect the safety of the vehicle's operation or result in the bus' mechanical breakdown.

Each school day a bus driver shall inspect:

1. Windows to determine if they are easily raised and lowered. Special attention should be paid to those school buses with side emergency windows.
2. Seats to determine if they have been cut or damaged.
3. Service door to determine if it will operate properly.
4. Bus steps and remove mud and other matter so that doors will open and close smoothly.
5. Bus for any abuse by students. Damage to the bus must be reported to the appropriate school officials promptly.
6. Emergency doors before loading students in the morning and afternoon. The doors must be in good operating condition and securely closed.
7. Roof hatches to make sure that they will open and close properly.

A bus driver should:

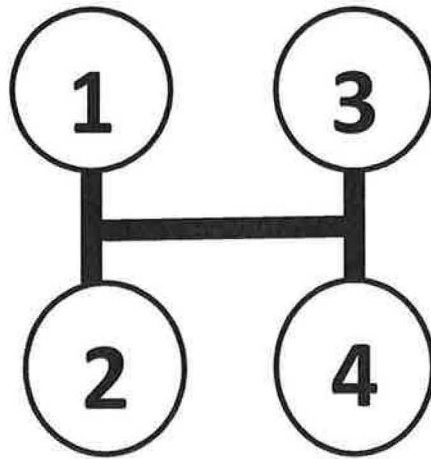
1. Keep close check on the instrument panel for any indication of trouble.
2. Keep alert for any sound or odor that would indicate mechanical or electrical trouble.
If trouble is detected, stop bus in a safe place, and do not move it until the problem is determined and corrected.
3. Check brakes frequently.
4. Leave windows of bus slightly open when stored or parked.
5. Make sure that antifreeze is of sufficient strength to prevent freezing.
6. Keep interior of the bus clean at all times.
7. Guard against hitting stones, curbs, and other obstructions that would damage tires.
8. Avoid rough places in road as much as possible.

OPERATION OF A SCHOOL BUS

Good visibility is absolutely essential for the safe operation of a school bus. The bus driver should be sure that all windows are clear and that no obstructions within the bus prevent visibility in all directions.

Starting (With Standard Transmission)

1. Start smoothly in the proper gear and shift smoothly. Smoothness is an earmark of skill. Double clutch if necessary to avoid clashing of gears.
2. For all starts, other than downgrades, up-shift through all four gears in the following order:
 - (a) Number 1 gear – accelerate to approximately 5 mph before shifting
 - (b) Number 2 gear – accelerate to approximately 10 mph before shifting
 - (c) Number 3 gear – accelerate to approximately 20 mph before shifting
 - (d) Do not shift into number 4 at low speeds



- (e) For five speed transmissions, use gear shift position number 5 as the highest gear.

3. When going uphill and it becomes necessary to downshift, normally, it should be done as follows:
 - (a) Shift to gear number 3 at approximately 20 mph
 - (b) Shift to gear number 2 at approximately 10 mph
 - (c) Shift to gear number 1 at approximately 5 mphGear number 1 provides power but does not produce much speed. A common fault is failure to use the proper gear on hills.
4. For buses having five forward gears, it is recommended that the lowest gear not be used except in cases where considerable power is needed at very low speeds. Otherwise, the shifting order is the same. Gear positions will vary with different transmissions.
5. Before descending a steep hill make sure you are in a low enough gear, usually lower than the gear required to climb the same hill.
6. Keep all pressure off the clutch while the engine is pulling. The left foot should be on the floor except to clutch and shift.
7. Never coast downhill or to stop.
8. Avoid pulling high gears too hard or over speeding lower gears.
9. Before moving a bus, after loading and unloading students, shift into proper gear, close door, deactivate signals, and release brake. Check to see that no student is in front of the bus.
10. School buses with automatic transmissions should be operated according to manufacturer's instructions.

Stopping

1. Before stopping a bus to load or unload students:
 - (a) Test brakes by pushing brake pedal in slightly; remove foot from pedal.
 - (b) Check rear view mirror for vehicles approaching from rear.
 - (c) Activate warning signal 100-300 feet.
 - (d) Remove foot from accelerator.

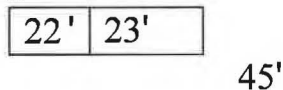
- (e) Place foot on brake pedal and push pedal in gently.
- (f) Push clutch in before coming to a complete stop.
- (g) Make a good, smooth stop.

2. Do most of the necessary braking before entering a curve. Be prepared for any emergency. Test brakes lightly before starting down a hill or any other time before brakes are needed. If the proper procedure is followed, the warning signal will be given in ample time. Keep in mind that the warning signal should be given at least 100 feet before reaching the stopping point. Common sense should be exercised in the matter of giving signals. There are cases when the warning signal should be given at least 300 feet from the stopping point.

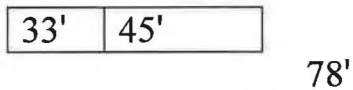
There is a misconception with reference to the law regarding passing school buses while loading and unloading students. After the warning signal is given, the other vehicle can legally pass a school bus until the school bus comes to a complete stop and the stop arm(s) are activated.

The chart below shows approximate stopping distances required at various speeds. The first block in each line indicates the distance traveled during reaction time. The second block shows actual stopping distance after the brake is applied. The last number shows total stopping distance.

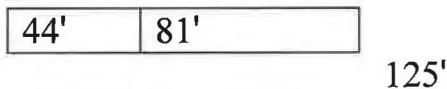
20 MPH



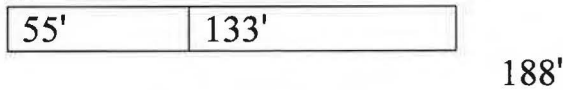
30 MPH



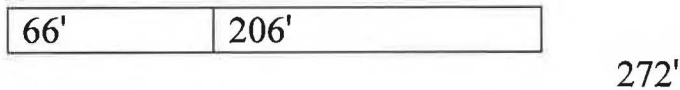
40 MPH



50 MPH



60 MPH



3. Become familiar with stopping distances at different speeds as given in the chart above.

(a) The reaction time of the average person is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second. This is the time required for a person to react after recognition of an accident producing situation. (Before a bus driver can react to an emergency, he/she must first perceive or recognize the need to take action.)

(b) The reaction distance of a person will vary directly as the speed varies.

Some bus drivers may believe that the distances given in the chart (shown on page 8) are incorrect and that their stopping distances are less than those given in the chart. This misconception has been responsible for a number of accidents, some of which were classified as tragic. The chart shows minimum distances buses should remain behind vehicles at different speeds.

The figures in the chart are approximate distances for dry surfaces, good tires, and good brakes. The distances would be considerably greater for slick surfaces.

Stay far enough behind other vehicles to permit a safe stop should the other vehicle stop suddenly. Allow at least (1) one vehicle length for every 10 miles per hour of speed.

Turning

1. When preparing to turn, use directional signal. Do not use the stop arm as a means of signaling unless it is the only means available. Give turn signal at proper time and distance (not less than 100 feet) before reaching the turning point.
2. When preparing to make a left turn, yield to a vehicle that is approaching from the opposite direction if the vehicle is not preparing to turn left.
3. Do not make a left turn if another vehicle is attempting to pass.
4. On a four lane street or highway, a right turn shall be made from the right or outside lane.

Parking

1. The bus driver shall park his/her bus at the last school at which students unload or at a place designated by the appropriate school official.
2. The bus driver shall park the bus at night and on weekends at a place designated by the superintendent or the transportation director. If the designated parking place is at the bus driver's home, he/she shall be responsible for its safe keeping.

DRIVERS' RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENTS

1. Train students to observe transportation regulations.
2. A bus driver is responsible for all students while they are on the bus and while crossing the road/street to and from the bus.
3. Keep school bus as comfortable as possible.
4. Know which students who may have physical weaknesses such as those who are subject to motion sickness, diabetic, etc.
5. Special attention should be given to students who are mentally or physically handicapped.
6. Never administer corporal punishment to a student. A school bus driver does not have the authority to administer corporal punishment to a student. If a student needs punishment for misconduct, the bus driver should report the student's misconduct to the school principal.
7. Operate the school bus in a manner that will gain the confidence of the students, parents, and other motorists.
8. Never permit students to board or leave the bus while it is in motion.
9. Do not permit a student to run along by the bus while it is in motion.
10. Do not permit students to ride on the outside of the bus.
11. Do not permit a student to stick their head or hands out the windows.

- 12.If a student's home is on the opposite side of the road or street from the bus stop, the student must cross the road or street in front of the bus. Special precaution must be exercised by the bus driver and by the student. The bus driver must count the number of students who cleared the area in front of the bus before proceeding.
- 13.When students must cross the road or street to get on the bus in the morning, or unload in the afternoon, the bus driver shall wave his arm as a signal when it is safe for the students to cross.
- 14.Students will not be permitted to cross the road or street in the morning to get on the bus or in the afternoon to unload until the proper signal is given to cross.
- 15.Give special attention to kindergarten and first grade students especially during the first days of school. Assign an older student to aid each beginner in finding his place in school and in getting on the bus after school is dismissed.
- 16.A bus driver shall not permit a student to leave the bus before arriving at school or home without proper authorization from a school administrator.
- 17.A student's right to ride a school bus depends on their good conduct. Riding a bus is a privilege not a right.
- 18.A bus driver should not demand that students be as quiet as they should be in a classroom. Students should be permitted to talk and laugh to the extent that it does not interfere with safe driving.
- 19.Students are not allowed to stand in front of stanchions and guard rails while the bus is in motion.
- 20.Designate seats if necessary to maintain order, otherwise, allow voluntary seating.
- 21.A student should be dealt with individually and privately when possible to correct misconduct.
- 22.A bus driver shall not put a student off the bus for misconduct.

23. A bus driver's dress should be neat in appearance.
24. The bus should be operated on schedule morning and afternoon regardless of weather conditions.
25. Notify schools served and/or students of any change in schedule or routing.
26. Post bus schedule in the school bus.
27. Make every stop, but do not wait for a student unless the student is seen coming. (This does not apply in the event the driver is ahead of schedule. In case the bus arrives at the stop early, the bus driver should wait.)
28. Use common sense and good judgment at all times and under all circumstances.

DRIVERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

1. Cooperate with the principal in making a good bus schedule.
2. Establish a good working relationship with mechanics.
3. Be considerate of other motorists – delay only as long as absolutely necessary at loading/unloading stops.
4. If traveling in the same direction as a funeral procession, do not pass. It is common courtesy to yield the right-of-way to funeral procession and to proceed with regard to traffic signals.

A BUS DRIVER SHALL:

1. Know and obey traffic signs, signals, and road markings by meanings, shapes, and colors. (See pages 14-19.)
2. Follow all vehicles at a safe distance.
3. **ALWAYS** stop the school bus at least 15 feet and not more than 50 feet before crossing railroad; open window at the driver's left and open the service door; listen and look in both directions along track for any

approaching train; use a gear that will provide ample power to cross track without shifting; and proceed only when it is safe beyond any possible doubt.

4. **ALWAYS** stop school bus before crossing a highway; listen and look in both directions along highway; use a gear that will provide ample power to cross without shifting; and proceed only when it is safe beyond any possible doubt.
5. Stop to unload or load students at a safe place. Stops should be at places where vehicles can be seen at least 300 feet in both directions. (Length of a football field – goal line to goal line.)
6. Gauge speed according to driving conditions. The maximum legal speed for a school bus while transporting students to and from school on regular routes is 45 miles per hour. However, safe maximums speeds will depend on conditions on roads, weather, traffic, etc.
7. Exercise extreme caution when passing another vehicle.
8. Practice defensive driving. A defensive driver is prepared to avoid mistakes of other drivers. Never take anything for granted, and try to recognize an accident producing situation in time to prevent an accident.
9. Have a definite horn signal and sound before making stop for students.
10. Wear seat belt at all times when operating the school bus.
11. Be responsible at all times for the operation of the bus.
12. Make a written application for employment to the local school district on forms provided by the district.
13. Have the school bus under complete control at all times.
14. Blow the horn in rapid succession several times if it appears that students who are preparing to cross road/street are in any danger.
15. Check the school bus before exiting after each route for students.

The school bus driver is subject to dismissal for using his/her bus for unauthorized purposes or for violation of any State law or regulation or for failure to perform his/her duties faithfully as a school bus driver provided by the laws of Mississippi and these rules and regulations.

TRAFFIC SIGNS, ROAD SIGNS, AND SIGNALS

Regulatory Signs - - - Regulate the movement of traffic



The stop sign is the only 8-sided traffic sign. It means that you must come to a complete stop before entering the Intersection ahead and yield to traffic close enough to be an immediate hazard. If there is a crosswalk, stop before entering the crosswalk.



The yield right-of-way sign is an equilateral triangle. It means slow down so you can yield the right-of-way to vehicles on the roadway being entered.



You must not pass any vehicle going in the same direction as you are, while you are in the area. The sign is shaped like a pennant.



You must not make a left turn at this Intersection.



You must not make a right turn at this Intersection.



This sign prohibits turning around in an Intersection, across the center of a street or a freeway median (center) strip.



This marks a one-way roadway with traffic coming against you. You must not enter the one-way roadway at this point.



Trucks are not allowed on this street/highway.



**You are nearing a railroad crossing.
Use caution.**



Fifteen miles per hour when passing a school during school recess or while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours.



You are on a two-way roadway and should keep to the right to avoid on-coming traffic.



The roadway is slippery if it is wet. Go slowly.



There is a “Stop” and “Go” traffic light ahead.



Warning that two roadways are joining and vehicles will have to blend or merge into one lane.

MERGE



You are approaching a roadway with two-way traffic.

DIVIDED HIGHWAY ENDS

A BUS DRIVER SHALL NOT:

1. Open school bus door to unload students when a speeding vehicle is nearing stopping point.
2. Use any tobacco products on the school bus.
3. Move school bus unless all students are inside, in their seats, and doors are closed.
4. Use a cell phone or any other wireless communication device while the school bus is in motion.
5. Continue to make student stops on a highway when traffic accumulates behind the school bus. Pull off the road at a safe and convenient place and let accumulated traffic pass. These stops should not be made near regular student pick up points.
6. Drive a school bus backwards on the school grounds unless absolutely necessary and never unless properly directed. A bus driver should not drive a bus backward at any place unless properly directed or at least not until he/she makes certain it is safe to do so.
7. Leave school bus on roadway at night.
8. Drive a school bus without good brakes. Good brakes are essential for safety and should not be abused. Care should be taken to make sure that brakes are in good condition at all times.
9. Depend on signals given by the driver of another vehicle. The other driver may do the opposite from what he signals to do.
10. Leave the driver's seat with the engine running when students are on the bus. The driver must always take the ignition key with him/her if he/she has to leave the bus.

11. Allow anyone else, except a qualified and approved substitute driver, to drive his/her bus on a route. The substitute bus driver shall be governed by the same laws, rules and regulations as the regular bus driver.
12. Allow the use of rear door for entrance or exit other than emergency cases.
13. Put fuel in the bus while engine is running or while there are students on the school bus.
14. Move the school bus while students are entering or exiting the school bus.
15. Pass another vehicle when the other vehicle is going the same direction as the school bus:
 - (a) When approaching the top of a hill.
 - (b) When approaching a bridge, overpass or viaduct.
 - (c) When meeting another vehicle that is near.
 - (d) When approaching a curve.
 - (e) When within 300 feet of an intersection.
 - (f) When approaching a railroad.
 - (g) When yellow line is at right of center.
 - (h) When any other dangerous situation is evident.
16. Operate a school bus while under the influence of any intoxicant.
17. Drive a bus off the regular route without proper authorization. Special trips will not be made unless the bus driver has received prior written approval from the superintendent of the school district, for the specific trip being made.

HAZARDS

1. The bus driver should constantly be alert for road and traffic hazards. Examples of these are: long pole trailers, wide loads, speeding vehicles, etc.
2. Dangerous conditions should be reported to proper authorities. Examples of these are blind curves, blind highway intersections, blind railroad intersections, narrow curves, bad bridges, etc.
3. The bus driver should be alert for extreme weather conditions that may affect the safety of the students and the school bus. Examples of these are

thunderstorms and heavy down pour of rain, flooding conditions, tornados, icy roads, etc.

EMERGENCIES

Accidents

The Bus Driver Shall:

1. Exercise extreme caution should he/she be involved in an accident.
2. Send someone to flag traffic. A trained and mature student should be selected for this task.
3. Guard against fire.
4. Unless the school bus is severely damaged or endangered by fire, keep the students inside the bus. The bus driver should not leave the bus unless it is absolutely necessary. The driver should stay near the school bus in order to give close supervision to students.
5. Check students for injuries.
6. Have someone call an ambulance if necessary.
7. Have someone call a law enforcement official.
8. Notify school authorities of the accident and injury to student(s).
9. Place emergency warning devices at least 100 feet in front and rear of the school bus and one on roadway side of the school bus when prolonged stop is necessary (see Commercial Driver's License Manual – page 2-13).
10. If an accident involves another vehicle, be courteous to the other driver and remain calm.
11. Obtain name and address of the owner of the other vehicle and witness(es) to the accident.

12. Do not place the blame for the accident or make any admission of liability. The accident report should reveal the facts of the accident.
13. File report of accident with the school district superintendent and the Division of Pupil Transportation, Mississippi Department of Education, within ten (10) days after the date of the accident. (Use form furnished by the Division of Pupil Transportation to report the accident.)
14. File written report with the State Commissioner of Public Safety with ten (10) days if the accident results in injury or death or if there is total property damage of \$250.00 or more. (Use form furnished by the Commissioner of Public Safety.)

RULES AND REGULATIONS STUDENTS MUST OBSERVE

Students Shall:

1. Be ready in the morning at the scheduled time and place for the school bus to arrive.
2. Always look in both directions and pass in front of bus, if necessary to cross road or street, to mount bus or after dismounting bus. Student should wait for bus driver to signal to cross.
3. Wait until the school bus comes to a complete stop before boarding or unloading.
4. Be quiet when school bus is nearing and crossing a railroad and highway.

Students Shall Not:

1. Play in the road or street while waiting on the bus.
2. Put their head or hands out of windows.
3. Ride outside of school bus.
4. Mar or deface the school bus.
5. Smoke or use intoxicants while on the bus.

6. Fight on the school bus.
7. Strike or threaten bus driver or bus attendant.
8. Use profane language or make vulgar gestures.
9. Carry deadly weapons on the bus.
10. Make excessive noise that is detracting to bus driver and other students.
11. Throw objects inside or out the bus.
12. Use cell phone or other wireless communication device while on the bus.
13. Commit any other act of improper conduct.

NOTE: The bus driver is empowered to enforce the regulations by reporting all violations to the principal. If any student persists in disobeying any of the regulations and rules of good conduct, school officials may opt to suspend or expel the student.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS

The Superintendent Shall:

1. Be responsible for planning routes that will provide maximum safety and are economical for those served.
2. Make certain that school buses are kept in safe operating condition through a systematic inspection and preventative maintenance program.
3. Make sure that all school buses meet the minimum requirements of the Mississippi Board of Education.
4. Make sure that every school bus is equipped with a fire extinguisher, first aid kit and warning devices ready for use and any other safety equipment required by the Mississippi Department of Education.

5. Issue all instructions to drivers for special trips authorized by law on forms furnished by the Mississippi Department of Education.
6. Assist in organizing training for bus drivers and cooperate with bus driver instructor.
7. Make sure that all bus drivers are properly certified and qualified to operation a school bus.
8. Ensure that all required reports and documents are submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education by the established deadline.

The Principal Shall:

1. Assist and advise bus drivers in maintaining proper student behavior.
2. Discipline students for misconduct on school buses.
3. Make applications for the use of school buses for activity trips and assign a responsible person or persons to supervise the students on all such trips.
4. Be responsible for student instruction in safe driving practices.
5. Cooperate with the bus drivers to protect the buses from abuse while they are parked on school grounds.

The Principal and/or Transportation Director Should:

1. Cooperate with other school personnel and agencies in planning school bus routes, determining stops and selecting and training school bus drivers.
2. Keep parents and students informed concerning the bus schedule changes and their responsibilities in the transportation program.
3. Be responsible for inspection of school buses to determine if they are being abused or damaged by students or bus drivers.
4. Be responsible for the supervision of students when loading or unloading on school grounds.

5. Hold meetings, as often as necessary, with school bus drivers; to review safety regulations and impress upon them the importance of compliance with all regulations governing student transportation.
6. In preschool faculty meetings, request teachers to inform students on the first day of school the correct procedure in waiting for the school bus, loading and unloading and other rules students must observe.
7. Explain to all students entitled to transportation, during an assembly period, rules that they must observe.
8. Encourage teachers to review the transportation rules students must observe.
9. Inform people of the community, by the best means possible of the law governing the passing of school buses. The law requires that the drivers of other vehicles are to stop while the bus is stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading students.
10. With the help of the bus driver, determine the students entitled to transportation on each route, and make good time schedules for each route. This should be done during the first ten (10) days of school.
11. Arrange emergency evacuation drills for school buses. (Suggestions provided by the Mississippi Department of Education.)

Teachers Should:

1. Explain the transportation rules and regulations that pupils must observe and review from time to time.
2. Encourage students to inform parents with reference to the law governing other vehicles passing school buses while they are stopped to load or unload students. Many students have lost their lives in the past, while waiting for the school bus and by crossing the road/street to board the bus. Both students and parents need to be aware of this danger.

Parents Should:

1. Cooperate with school officials and bus drivers in promoting safe and efficient student transportation. Parents should not expect school buses to operate on roads/streets where adequate places for turning around are not provided.
2. Have students at the bus stop at the time designated for the bus to arrive.
3. Instruct students not to play or cross the road/street until the school bus arrives.
4. Use their influence in getting roads/streets improved.
5. Make sure that their child/children cooperate with the bus driver.
6. Understand that students who ride school buses must obey all regulations governing the students riding the school buses.
7. **Understand that failure to obey the regulations, students may be suspended or expelled from the school bus. Riding the school bus is a privilege.**

STUDENT SAFETY PATROL

A student safety patrol may be appointed at the discretions of school officials. The safety patrol's function is to direct students as they load and unload the school bus and to assist the school bus driver whenever necessary.

It is recommended that if a student safety patrol is appointed the following criteria be followed:

1. The safety patrol student must be at least 12 years old.
2. Permission must be granted from parent(s) or guardian for the student to serve and that the duties are explained.
3. The safety patrol's purpose is to assist or direct students in safely crossing the road/street if it is necessary for student(s) to cross to load or unload. The safety patrol should not attempt to stop traffic.

4. The safety patrol should be instructed in safety procedures and to act upon instructions from the bus driver.
5. The safety patrol should be furnished appropriate equipment or wearing apparel that clearly identifies his role and also enables him/her to adequately and safely carry out their assignment.
6. In case of an emergency, the safety patrol may be called on to assist.
7. If it becomes necessary for the driver to back the bus, the safety patrol may assist by watching carefully for other vehicles and informing the driver about hazardous conditions.

NATHAN'S LAW

Senate Bill 2472 or Nathan's Law was signed into law by then Governor Haley Barbour and went into effect on July 1, 2011. The legislation was named for Nathan Key, a 5-year-old who was killed in December 2009 when a vehicle illegally passed his school bus as he was unloading.

The following are major components of Nathan's Law:

- Requires motorists to stop at least 10 feet from a school bus when the bus is loading or unloading children, and motorists must not proceed until all children have crossed the street to or from the school bus and the flashing red lights are no longer activated and the stop sign on the side of the bus is retracted.
- Authorizes a charge of felony assault and a prison sentence of up to 20 years for motorists convicted of illegally passing a school bus that, in the process, results in injury or death.
- Authorizes cameras be equipped on school bus stop arms to film perpetrators in the act.
- Required the development of at least 10 questions relating to school bus safety on a driver's license test.
- Established a School Bus Safety Task Force.

- Prohibits school bus drivers from using cell phones, wireless communication devices, vehicle navigation systems or "personal digital assistants" while the bus is in motion.
- Increases the fine for passing a stopped school bus.

MISSISSIPPI
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK



Mississippi Department of Education

Jackson, Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK



Prepared by the
Division of Pupil Transportation

Approved by
MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 16, 1993
Revised July 2013
Revised February 2014

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Mississippi Department of Education
Jackson, Mississippi

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint school bus drivers, students, school superintendents, school principals, and parents with their responsibilities and to encourage their acceptance of these responsibilities to assure a safer and more economical transportation program.

The safety of every pupil is extremely important. School administrators and school bus drivers must do everything possible to ensure safe operation of the school buses. Good attitudes, skills and judgment are necessary for the safety and welfare of the children. A thorough knowledge of this book will help to provide a better transportation program for the schools of the state.

Accidents often occur as a result of carelessness or indifference. **MOST SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS ARE DUE TO HUMAN FAILURE.**

One of the greatest hazards for pupils is in the loading zones. Extreme caution must be exercised to see that children load and unload safely on routes as well as at school.

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This handbook is not intended to present in detail every responsibility of the bus driver. However, it does provide valuable information which, if learned and applied, will ensure to a great extent the safety of the child and protection of the bus.

The Mississippi Pupil Transportation Handbook is dedicated to the conscientious, capable and efficient school bus drivers of Mississippi who transport school children to and from school daily.

**MISSISSIPPI
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK**

**LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Section 37-41-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, states in part:

The Mississippi Board of Education is authorized, empowered and directed to promulgate rules and regulations for:

- (a) Setting standards for public school bus routes;
- (b) Approving or disapproving plans for public school bus routes;
- (c) Setting standards for public school buses;
- (d) Setting standards for public school bus drivers;
- (e) Formulating procedures for selecting public school bus drivers;
- (f) Formulating courses of training for public school bus drivers and mechanics and assist in administering and financing such courses;
- (g) Providing operation procedure for public school buses to insure safety of students;
- (h) Furnishing consultative supervision for the operation of county school bus garages, and approving plans for such garages and the proposed expenditure of transportation funds therefore;
- (i) Formulating specification for use in purchasing public school buses; getting bids on public school buses, equipment and supplies; and fixing prices based upon said bids which school districts may not exceed in purchasing said equipment;
- (j) Formulating specifications for use by school districts in purchasing used school buses;
- (k) Providing a system of records and reports for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Sections 37-41-1 to 37-41-51, and providing the county superintendent and the superintendent of municipal separate school districts with added territory with a sufficient supply of report forms;
- (l) Conduct upon said buses; and
- (m) The method by which, and the circumstances in which, any individual who is not a student scheduled to be a passenger upon that particular bus, a member of the public school administration or faculty, or a law enforcement official may obtain entry upon said buses.

All rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the Mississippi Board of Education relating to school bus drivers shall also be applicable to drivers of privately-owned buses transporting public school children.

Pupil transportation rules and regulations adopted by the Mississippi Board of Education are equivalent to LAWS.

CARE OF THE STUDENT IS THE BUS DRIVER'S GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. CARE OF THE BUS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SAFETY OF THE STUDENT. CARE OF THE STUDENT AND CARE OF THE BUS ARE SO CLOSELY RELATED THAT THE BUS DRIVER SHOULD EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO OPERATE HIS/HER BUS IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD ASSURE SAFETY OF THE STUDENT AND ECONOMICAL OPERATION OF THE BUS.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

Physical, Mental and Moral Requirements

1. A driver must have at least 20/40 visual acuity in each eye.
2. It is recommended that each driver have a vision test for glaucoma, depth perception, and presence of cataracts.
3. A driver must have a recent physical examination that includes but is not limited to: tests for tuberculosis, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

A doctor or physical therapist may be requested to give an opinion as to whether or not an applicant is physically qualified to perform the work of a school bus driver based on state and federal regulations.

4. All drivers must consent to and pass a pre-employment drug screening and be placed in a pool for random drug screening.
5. A bus driver must have the normal use of both arms, both hands, both legs, and both feet.
6. A bus driver must have sufficient physical strength to drive a school bus.
7. A bus driver shall be a person of good moral character.

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8. A bus driver shall be emotionally stable.

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9. A driver's hearing shall not be impaired to the extent that it would interfere with the safe operation of a school bus.

10. A bus driver must pass a pre-employment agility test administered as part of the Mississippi Department of Education bus driver training.

11. A driver must have an acceptable driving record with no convictions deemed disqualifying under the Mississippi Commercial Drivers License Law, Section 63-1-73 through 63-1-90, Mississippi Code as amended.

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Age Limits

A school bus driver must be a least 18 years of age.

License and Certificate

1. A school bus driver shall have a valid Class A, B or C Commercial Driver's License with a "P" and "S" endorsement.
2. A school bus driver shall have a valid school bus driver's certificate issued by an instructor approved by the Mississippi Department of Education.

"A minimum of eight (8) hours in a regular school bus driver training course approved by the Mississippi Board of Education is one of the requirements for receiving a certification card which is valid for no more than two (2) years."

Bus drivers' that have a chargeable accident during the school year may be required to attend a regular bus school the following summer, regardless of the validity of their certification card. This requirement is left to the discretion of the local school district and the Mississippi Department of Education, Division of Pupil Transportation officials.

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3. Bus drivers may be required to have a valid "Medical Card."

Driver Attitude

1. A bus driver should be cheerful, confident, serious minded, and considerate of others.
2. A bus driver should not quarrel with students.
3. A bus driver should be friendly, fair, and firm.
4. A bus driver should control his/her temper at all times.
5. A bus driver should display a positive attitude.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Preventive maintenance may be defined as maintaining a vehicle in a safe and economical operating condition through a systematic inspection and service plan.

The bus driver has the responsibility in the preventive maintenance program. The bus driver is on the road with the vehicle for several hours each day and is in the position to observe the bus' performance under all conditions. The bus driver should learn to recognize defects and immediately report the symptoms to the maintenance department or to appropriate school officials. **Remember, defects cannot be repaired if they are not reported.**

Daily Inspection

The following daily bus inspection shall be made before starting on the morning run:

1. Check the oil, water, battery, and belts before starting the engine.
2. Start the engine and make an inside check (instrument panel, brakes, windshield, wipers, stop arm, crossing control arm, horn, mirrors, turn signals, etc.).
3. Check tires and wheels.
4. Check all lights.
5. Clean glass and light lenses as needed.
6. Check emergency door and buzzer and close door securely.
7. Check exhaust system.

While the walk around safety check is being made, the engine may idle no more than 3-5 minutes. This should allow sufficient time for the engine to warm up. Refrain from revving a cold engine. Considerable damage may occur to bearings and cylinder.

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The bus driver shall report promptly in writing any defects that may affect the safety of the vehicle's operation or result in the bus' mechanical breakdown.

Each school day a bus driver shall inspect:

1. Windows to determine if they are easily raised and lowered. Special attention should be paid to those school buses with side emergency windows.
2. Seats to determine if they have been cut or damaged.
3. Service door to determine if it will operate properly.
4. Bus steps and remove mud and other matter so that doors will open and close smoothly.
5. Bus for any abuse by students. Damage to the bus must be reported to the appropriate school officials promptly.
6. Emergency doors before loading students in the morning and afternoon. The doors must be in good operating condition and securely closed.
7. Roof hatches to make sure that they will open and close properly.

A bus driver should:

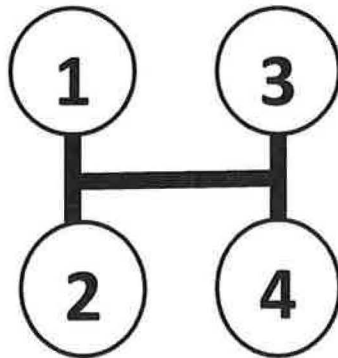
1. Keep close check on the instrument panel for any indication of trouble.
2. Keep alert for any sound or odor that would indicate mechanical or electrical trouble.
If trouble is detected, stop bus in a safe place, and do not move it until the problem is determined and corrected.
3. Check brakes frequently.
4. Leave windows of bus slightly open when stored or parked.
5. Make sure that antifreeze is of sufficient strength to prevent freezing.
6. Keep interior of the bus clean at all times.
7. Guard against hitting stones, curbs, and other obstructions that would damage tires.
8. Avoid rough places in road as much as possible.

OPERATION OF A SCHOOL BUS

Good visibility is absolutely essential for the safe operation of a school bus. The bus driver should be sure that all windows are clear and that no obstructions within the bus prevent visibility in all directions.

Starting (With Standard Transmission)

1. Start smoothly in the proper gear and shift smoothly. Smoothness is an earmark of skill. Double clutch if necessary to avoid clashing of gears.
2. For all starts, other than downgrades, up-shift through all four gears in the following order:
 - (a) Number 1 gear – accelerate to approximately 5 mph before shifting
 - (b) Number 2 gear – accelerate to approximately 10 mph before shifting
 - (c) Number 3 gear – accelerate to approximately 20 mph before shifting
 - (d) Do not shift into number 4 at low speeds



- (e) For five speed transmissions, use gear shift position number 5 as the highest gear.

3. When going uphill and it becomes necessary to downshift, normally, it should be done as follows:
 - (a) Shift to gear number 3 at approximately 20 mph
 - (b) Shift to gear number 2 at approximately 10 mph
 - (c) Shift to gear number 1 at approximately 5 mphGear number 1 provides power but does not produce much speed. A common fault is failure to use the proper gear on hills.
4. For buses having five forward gears, it is recommended that the lowest gear not be used except in cases where considerable power is needed at very low speeds. Otherwise, the shifting order is the same. Gear positions will vary with different transmissions.
5. Before descending a steep hill make sure you are in a low enough gear, usually lower than the gear required to climb the same hill.
6. Keep all pressure off the clutch while the engine is pulling. The left foot should be on the floor except to clutch and shift.
7. Never coast downhill or to stop.
8. Avoid pulling high gears too hard or over speeding lower gears.
9. Before moving a bus, after loading and unloading students, shift into proper gear, close door, deactivate signals, and release brake. Check to see that no student is in front of the bus.
10. School buses with automatic transmissions should be operated according to manufacturer's instructions.

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Stopping

1. Before stopping a bus to load or unload students:
 - (a) Test brakes by pushing brake pedal in slightly; remove foot from pedal.
 - (b) Check rear view mirror for vehicles approaching from rear.
 - (c) Activate warning signal 100-300 feet.
 - (d) Remove foot from accelerator.

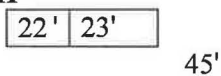
- (e) Place foot on brake pedal and push pedal in gently.
- (f) Push clutch in before coming to a complete stop.
- (g) Make a good, smooth stop.

2. Do most of the necessary braking before entering a curve. Be prepared for any emergency. Test brakes lightly before starting down a hill or any other time before brakes are needed. If the proper procedure is followed, the warning signal will be given in ample time. Keep in mind that the warning signal should be given at least 100 feet before reaching the stopping point. Common sense should be exercised in the matter of giving signals. There are cases when the warning signal should be given at least 300 feet from the stopping point.

There is a misconception with reference to the law regarding passing school buses while loading and unloading students. After the warning signal is given, the other vehicle can legally pass a school bus until the school bus comes to a complete stop and the stop arm(s) are activated.

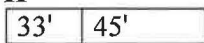
The chart below shows approximate stopping distances required at various speeds. The first block in each line indicates the distance traveled during reaction time. The second block shows actual stopping distance after the brake is applied. The last number shows total stopping distance.

20 MPH



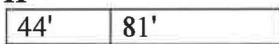
45'

30 MPH



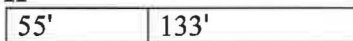
78'

40 MPH



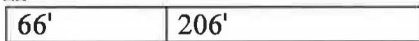
125'

50 MPH



188'

60 MPH



272'

3. Become familiar with stopping distances at different speeds as given in the chart above.

(a) The reaction time of the average person is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second. This is the time required for a person to react after recognition of an accident producing situation. (Before a bus driver can react to an emergency, he/she must first perceive or recognize the need to take action.)

(b) The reaction distance of a person will vary directly as the speed varies.

Some bus drivers may believe that the distances given in the chart (shown on page 8) are incorrect and that their stopping distances are less than those given in the chart. This misconception has been responsible for a number of accidents, some of which were classified as tragic. The chart shows minimum distances buses should remain behind vehicles at different speeds.

The figures in the chart are approximate distances for dry surfaces, good tires, and good brakes. The distances would be considerably greater for slick surfaces.

Stay far enough behind other vehicles to permit a safe stop should the other vehicle stop suddenly. Allow at least (1) one vehicle length for every 10 miles per hour of speed.

Turning

1. When preparing to turn, use directional signal. Do not use the stop arm as a means of signaling unless it is the only means available. Give turn signal at proper time and distance (not less than 100 feet) before reaching the turning point.
2. When preparing to make a left turn, yield to a vehicle that is approaching from the opposite direction if the vehicle is not preparing to turn left.
3. Do not make a left turn if another vehicle is attempting to pass.
4. On a four lane street or highway, a right turn shall be made from the right or outside lane.

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Parking

1. The bus driver shall park his/her bus at the last school at which students unload or at a place designated by the appropriate school official.
2. The bus driver shall park the bus at night and on weekends at a place designated by the superintendent or the transportation director. If the designated parking place is at the bus driver's home, he/she shall be responsible for its safe keeping.

DRIVERS' RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENTS

1. Train students to observe transportation regulations.
2. A bus driver is responsible for all students while they are on the bus and while crossing the road/street to and from the bus.
3. Keep school bus as comfortable as possible.
4. Know which students who may have physical weaknesses such as those who are subject to motion sickness, diabetic, etc.
5. Special attention should be given to students who are mentally or physically handicapped.
6. Never administer corporal punishment to a student. A school bus driver does not have the authority to administer corporal punishment to a student. If a student needs punishment for misconduct, the bus driver should report the student's misconduct to the school principal.
7. Operate the school bus in a manner that will gain the confidence of the students, parents, and other motorists.
8. Never permit students to board or leave the bus while it is in motion.
9. Do not permit a student to run along by the bus while it is in motion.
10. Do not permit students to ride on the outside of the bus.
11. Do not permit a student to stick their head or hands out the windows.

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- 12.If a student's home is on the opposite side of the road or street from the bus stop, the student must cross the road or street in front of the bus. Special precaution must be exercised by the bus driver and by the student. The bus driver must count the number of students who cleared the area in front of the bus before proceeding.
- 13.When students must cross the road or street to get on the bus in the morning, or unload in the afternoon, the bus driver shall wave his arm as a signal when it is safe for the students to cross.
- 14.Students will not be permitted to cross the road or street in the morning to get on the bus or in the afternoon to unload until the proper signal is given to cross.
- 15.Give special attention to kindergarten and first grade students especially during the first days of school. Assign an older student to aid each beginner in finding his place in school and in getting on the bus after school is dismissed.
- 16.A bus driver shall not permit a student to leave the bus before arriving at school or home without proper authorization from a school administrator.
- 17.A student's right to ride a school bus depends on their good conduct. Riding a bus is a priviledge not a right.
- 18.A bus driver should not demand that students be as quiet as they should be in a classroom. Students should be permitted to talk and laugh to the extent that it does not interfere with safe driving.
- 19.Students are not allowed to stand in front of stanchions and guard rails while the bus is in motion.
- 20.Designate seats if necessary to maintain order, otherwise, allow voluntary seating.
- 21.A student should be dealt with individually and privately when possible to correct misconduct.
- 22.A bus driver shall not put a student off the bus for misconduct.

23. A bus driver's dress should be neat in appearance.

24. The bus should be operated on schedule morning and afternoon, regardless of weather conditions.

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25. Notify schools served and/or students of any change in schedule or routing.

26. Post bus schedule in the school bus.

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27. Make every stop, but do not wait for a student unless the student is seen coming. (This does not apply in the event the driver is ahead of schedule. In case the bus arrives at the stop early, the bus driver should wait.)

28. Use common sense and good judgment at all times and under all circumstances.

DRIVERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

1. Cooperate with the principal in making a good bus schedule.
2. Establish a good working relationship with mechanics.
3. Be considerate of other motorists – delay only as long as absolutely necessary at loading/unloading stops.
4. If traveling in the same direction as a funeral procession, do not pass. It is common courtesy to yield the right-of-way to funeral procession and to proceed with regard to traffic signals.

A BUS DRIVER SHALL:

1. Know and obey traffic signs, signals, and road markings by meanings, shapes, and colors. (See pages 14-19.)
2. Follow all vehicles at a safe distance.
3. **ALWAYS** stop the school bus at least 15 feet and not more than 50 feet before crossing railroad; open window at the driver's left and open the service door; listen and look in both directions along track for any

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approaching train; use a gear that will provide ample power to cross track without shifting; and proceed only when it is safe beyond any possible doubt.

4. **ALWAYS** stop school bus before crossing a highway; listen and look in both directions along highway; use a gear that will provide ample power to cross without shifting; and proceed only when it is safe beyond any possible doubt.
5. Stop to unload or load students at a safe place. Stops should be at places where vehicles can be seen at least 300 feet in both directions. (Length of a football field – goal line to goal line.)
6. Gauge speed according to driving conditions. The maximum legal speed for a school bus while transporting students to and from school on regular routes is 45 miles per hour. However, safe maximums speeds will depend on conditions on roads, weather, traffic, etc.
7. Exercise extreme caution when passing another vehicle.
8. Practice defensive driving. A defensive driver is prepared to avoid mistakes of other drivers. Never take anything for granted, and try to recognize an accident producing situation in time to prevent an accident.
9. Have a definite horn signal and sound before making stop for students.
10. Wear seat belt at all times when operating the school bus.
11. Be responsible at all times for the operation of the bus.
12. Make a written application for employment to the local school district on forms provided by the district.
13. Have the school bus under complete control at all times.
14. Blow the horn in rapid succession several times if it appears that students who are preparing to cross road/street are in any danger.
15. Check the school bus before exiting after each route for students.

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The school bus driver is subject to dismissal for using his/her bus for unauthorized purposes or for violation of any State law or regulation or for failure to perform his/her duties faithfully as a school bus driver provided by the laws of Mississippi and these rules and regulations.

TRAFFIC SIGNS, ROAD SIGNS, AND SIGNALS

Regulatory Signs - - - Regulate the movement of traffic



The stop sign is the only 8-sided traffic sign. It means that you must come to a complete stop before entering the Intersection ahead and yield to traffic close enough to be an immediate hazard. If there is a crosswalk, stop before entering the crosswalk.



The yield right-of-way sign is an equilateral triangle. It means slow down so you can yield the right-of-way to vehicles on the roadway being entered.



You must not pass any vehicle going in the same direction as you are, while you are in the area. The sign is shaped like a pennant.



You must not make a left turn at this Intersection.



You must not make a right turn at this Intersection.



This sign prohibits turning around in an Intersection, across the center of a street or a freeway median (center) strip.



This marks a one-way roadway with traffic coming against you. You must not enter the one-way roadway at this point.



Trucks are not allowed on this street/highway.



You are nearing a railroad crossing. Use caution.



Fifteen miles per hour when passing a school during school recess or while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours.



You are on a two-way roadway and should keep to the right to avoid on-coming traffic.



**The roadway is slippery if it is wet.
Go slowly.**



There is a “Stop” and “Go” traffic light ahead.



Warning that two roadways are joining and vehicles will have to blend or merge into one lane.

MERGE



You are approaching a roadway with two-way traffic.

DIVIDED HIGHWAY ENDS

A BUS DRIVER SHALL NOT:

1. Open school bus door to unload students when a speeding vehicle is nearing stopping point.
2. Use any tobacco products on the school bus.
3. Move school bus unless all students are inside, in their seats, and doors are closed.
4. Use a cell phone or any other wireless communication device while the school bus is in motion.
5. Continue to make student stops on a highway when traffic accumulates behind the school bus. Pull off the road at a safe and convenient place and let accumulated traffic pass. These stops should not be made near regular student pick up points.
6. Drive a school bus backwards on the school grounds unless absolutely necessary and never unless properly directed. A bus driver should not drive a bus backward at any place unless properly directed or at least not until he/she makes certain it is safe to do so.
7. Leave school bus on roadway at night.
8. Drive a school bus without good brakes. Good brakes are essential for safety and should not be abused. Care should be taken to make sure that brakes are in good condition at all times.
9. Depend on signals given by the driver of another vehicle. The other driver may do the opposite from what he signals to do.
10. Leave the driver's seat with the engine running when students are on the bus. The driver must always take the ignition key with him/her if he/she has to leave the bus.

11. Allow anyone else, except a qualified and approved substitute driver, to drive his/her bus on a route. The substitute bus driver shall be governed by the same laws, rules and regulations as the regular bus driver.

12. Allow the use of rear door for entrance or exit other than emergency cases.

13. Put fuel in the bus while engine is running or while there are students on the school bus.

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14. Move the school bus while students are entering or exiting the school bus.

15. Pass another vehicle when the other vehicle is going the same direction as the school bus:

- (a) When approaching the top of a hill.
- (b) When approaching a bridge, overpass or viaduct.
- (c) When meeting another vehicle that is near.
- (d) When approaching a curve.
- (e) When within 300 feet of an intersection.
- (f) When approaching a railroad.
- (g) When yellow line is at right of center.
- (h) When any other dangerous situation is evident.

16. Operate a school bus while under the influence of any intoxicant.

17. Drive a bus off the regular route without proper authorization. Special trips will not be made unless the bus driver has received prior written approval from the superintendent of the school district, for the specific trip being made.

HAZARDS

- 1. The bus driver should constantly be alert for road and traffic hazards. Examples of these are: long pole trailers, wide loads, speeding vehicles, etc.
- 2. Dangerous conditions should be reported to proper authorities. Examples of these are blind curves, blind highway intersections, blind railroad intersections, narrow curves, bad bridges, etc.
- 3. The bus driver should be alert for extreme weather conditions that may affect the safety of the students and the school bus. Examples of these are

thunderstorms and heavy down pour of rain, flooding conditions, tornados, icy roads, etc.

EMERGENCIES

Accidents

The Bus Driver Shall:

1. Exercise extreme caution should he/she be involved in an accident.
2. Send someone to flag traffic. A trained and mature student should be selected for this task.
3. Guard against fire.
4. Unless the school bus is severely damaged or endangered by fire, keep the students inside the bus. The bus driver should not leave the bus unless it is absolutely necessary. The driver should stay near the school bus in order to give close supervision to students.
5. Check students for injuries.
6. Have someone call an ambulance if necessary.
7. Have someone call a law enforcement official.
8. Notify school authorities of the accident and injury to student(s).
9. Place emergency warning devices at least 100 feet in front and rear of the school bus and one on roadway side of the school bus when prolonged stop is necessary (see Commercial Driver's License Manual – page 2-13).
10. If an accident involves another vehicle, be courteous to the other driver and remain calm.
11. Obtain name and address of the owner of the other vehicle and witness(es) to the accident.

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12. Do not place the blame for the accident or make any admission of liability. The accident report should reveal the facts of the accident.
13. File report of accident with the school district superintendent and the Division of Pupil Transportation, Mississippi Department of Education, within ten (10) days after the date of the accident. (Use form furnished by the Division of Pupil Transportation to report the accident.)
14. File written report with the State Commissioner of Public Safety with ten (10) days if the accident results in injury or death or if there is total property damage of \$250.00 or more. (Use form furnished by the Commissioner of Public Safety.)

**RULES AND REGULATIONS STUDENTS
MUST OBSERVE**

Students Shall:

1. Be ready in the morning at the scheduled time and place for the school bus to arrive.
2. Always look in both directions and pass in front of bus, if necessary to cross road or street, to mount bus or after dismounting bus. Student should wait for bus driver to signal to cross.
3. Wait until the school bus comes to a complete stop before boarding or unloading.
4. Be quiet when school bus is nearing and crossing a railroad and highway.

Students Shall Not:

1. Play in the road or street while waiting on the bus.
2. Put their head or hands out of windows.
3. Ride outside of school bus.
4. Mar or deface the school bus.
5. Smoke or use intoxicants while on the bus.

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The Bus Driver Should:

- <#>Render first aid to students if necessary.
- <#>Be able to recognize and administer treatment for shock.
- <#>Know how to treat burns.
- <#>Know how to prevent students from injuring themselves in the event of epileptic seizures, etc.
- <#>Know how to treat students who faint.
- <#>Know how to treat a head injury.
- <#>Know how to determine if bones are broken.
- <#>Know how to stop bleeding.
- <#>Know what to do in case of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- <#>Avoid moving a seriously injured person.

6. Fight on the school bus.
7. Strike or threaten bus driver or bus attendant.
8. Use profane language or make vulgar gestures.
9. Carry deadly weapons on the bus.
10. Make excessive noise that is detracting to bus driver and other students.
11. Throw objects inside or out the bus.

12. Use cell phone or other wireless communication device while on the bus.

13. Commit any other act of improper conduct.

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NOTE: The bus driver is empowered to enforce the regulations by reporting all violations to the principal. If any student persists in disobeying any of the regulations and rules of good conduct, school officials may opt to suspend or expel the student.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS

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The Superintendent Shall:

1. Be responsible for planning routes that will provide maximum safety and are economical for those served.
2. Make certain that school buses are kept in safe operating condition through a systematic inspection and preventative maintenance program.
3. Make sure that all school buses meet the minimum requirements of the Mississippi Board of Education.

4. Make sure that every school bus is equipped with a fire extinguisher, first aid kit and warning devices ready for use and any other safety equipment required by the Mississippi Department of Education.
5. Issue all instructions to drivers for special trips authorized by law on forms furnished by the Mississippi Department of Education.
6. Assist in organizing training for bus drivers and cooperate with bus driver instructor.
7. Make sure that all bus drivers are properly certified and qualified to operation a school bus.
8. Ensure that all required reports and documents are submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education by the established deadline.

The Principal Shall:

1. Assist and advise bus drivers in maintaining proper student behavior.
2. Discipline students for misconduct on school buses.
3. Make applications for the use of school buses for activity trips and assign a responsible person or persons to supervise the students on all such trips.
4. Be responsible for student instruction in safe driving practices.
5. Cooperate with the bus drivers to protect the buses from abuse while they are parked on school grounds.

The Principal and/or Transportation Director Should:

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1. Cooperate with other school personnel and agencies in planning school bus routes, determining stops and selecting and training school bus drivers.
2. Keep parents and students informed concerning the bus schedule changes and their responsibilities in the transportation program.
3. Be responsible for inspection of school buses to determine if they are being abused or damaged by students or bus drivers.

4. Be responsible for the supervision of students when loading or unloading on school grounds.
5. Hold meetings, as often as necessary, with school bus drivers; to review safety regulations and impress upon them the importance of compliance with all regulations governing student transportation.
6. In preschool faculty meetings, request teachers to inform students on the first day of school the correct procedure in waiting for the school bus, loading and unloading and other rules students must observe.
7. Explain to all students entitled to transportation, during an assembly period, rules that they must observe.
8. Encourage teachers to review the transportation rules students must observe.
9. Inform people of the community, by the best means possible of the law governing the passing of school buses. The law requires that the drivers of other vehicles are to stop while the bus is stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading students.
10. With the help of the bus driver, determine the students entitled to transportation on each route, and make good time schedules for each route. This should be done during the first ten (10) days of school.
11. Arrange emergency evacuation drills for school buses. (Suggestions provided by the Mississippi Department of Education.)

Teachers Should:

1. Explain the transportation rules and regulations that pupils must observe and review from time to time.
2. Encourage students to inform parents with reference to the law governing other vehicles passing school buses while they are stopped to load or unload students. Many students have lost their lives in the past, while waiting for the school bus and by crossing the road/street to board the bus. Both students and parents need to be aware of this danger.

Parents Should:

1. Cooperate with school officials and bus drivers in promoting safe and efficient student transportation. Parents should not expect school buses to operate on roads/streets where adequate places for turning around are not provided.
2. Have students at the bus stop at the time designated for the bus to arrive.
3. Instruct students not to play or cross the road/street until the school bus arrives.
4. Use their influence in getting roads/streets improved.
5. Make sure that their child/children cooperate with the bus driver.

6. Understand that students who ride school buses must obey all regulations governing the students riding the school buses.

7. Understand that failure to obey the regulations, students may be suspended or expelled from the school bus. Riding the school bus is a privilege.

STUDENT SAFETY PATROL

A student safety patrol may be appointed at the discretions of school officials. The safety patrol's function is to direct students as they load and unload the school bus and to assist the school bus driver whenever necessary.

It is recommended that if a student safety patrol is appointed the following criteria be followed:

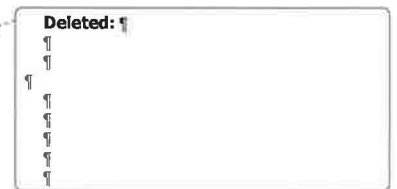
1. The safety patrol student must be at least 12 years old.
2. Permission must be granted from parent(s) or guardian for the student to serve and that the duties are explained.
3. The safety patrol's purpose is to assist or direct students in safely crossing the road/street if it is necessary for student(s) to cross to load or unload. The safety patrol should not attempt to stop traffic.

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4. The safety patrol should be instructed in safety procedures and to act upon instructions from the bus driver.
5. The safety patrol should be furnished appropriate equipment or wearing apparel that clearly identifies his role and also enables him/her to adequately and safely carry out their assignment.
6. In case of an emergency, the safety patrol may be called on to assist.
7. If it becomes necessary for the driver to back the bus, the safety patrol may assist by watching carefully for other vehicles and informing the driver about hazardous conditions.

NATHAN'S LAW

Senate Bill 2472 or Nathan's Law was signed into law by then Governor Haley Barbour and went into effect on July 1, 2011. The legislation was named for Nathan Key, a 5-year-old who was killed in December 2009 when a vehicle illegally passed his school bus as he was unloading.



The following are major components of Nathan's Law:

- Requires motorists to stop at least 10 feet from a school bus when the bus is loading or unloading children, and motorists must not proceed until all children have crossed the street to or from the school bus and the flashing red lights are no longer activated and the stop sign on the side of the bus is retracted.
- Authorizes a charge of felony assault and a prison sentence of up to 20 years for motorists convicted of illegally passing a school bus that, in the process, results in injury or death.
- Authorizes cameras be equipped on school bus stop arms to film perpetrators in the act.
- Required the development of at least 10 questions relating to school bus safety on a driver's license test.
- Established a School Bus Safety Task Force.

- Prohibits school bus drivers from using cell phones, wireless communication devices, vehicle navigation systems or "personal digital assistants" while ~~the bus is in motion~~.

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- Increases the fine for passing a stopped school bus.