

## 709 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY POLICY

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide safe transportation for students and to educate students on safety issues and the responsibilities of school bus ridership.

### II. PLAN FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY TRAINING

#### A. School Bus Safety Week

The STEP Academy may designate a school bus safety week. The National School Bus Safety Week is the third full week in October.

#### B. Student Training

1. The STEP Academy shall provide students enrolled in grades six (6) through twelve (12) with age-appropriate school bus safety training of the following concepts:
  - a. transportation by school bus is a privilege, not a right;
  - b. STEP Academy policies for student conduct and school bus safety;
  - c. appropriate conduct while on the bus;
  - d. the danger zones surrounding a school bus;
  - e. procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus;
  - f. procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing; and
  - g. school bus evacuation and other emergency procedures.
2. All students in grade 6 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training by the end of the third week of school. All students in grades 7 through 12 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training by the end of the sixth week of school, if they have not received school bus training in grade 6. Students in grades 6 through 12 who enroll in a school after the second week of school, are transported by school bus, and have not received training in their previous STEP Academy shall undergo school bus safety training or receive bus safety instructional materials within four weeks of their first day of attendance.

3. The STEP Academy must provide students enrolled in grades 6 bus safety training twice during the school year.
4. Students in grades 7 and 12 must receive training in the laws and proper procedures for operating a motor vehicle in the vicinity of a school bus.
5. The STEP Academy will make reasonable accommodations in training for students known to speak English as a second language and students with disabilities.
6. The STEP Academy may provide 6 grade students with school bus safety training before the first day of school.
7. The STEP Academy may provide student safety education for bicycling and pedestrian safety for students in grade 6.
8. The STEP Academy shall adopt and make available for public review a curriculum for transportation safety education.
9. Nonpublic school students transported by the STEP Academy will receive school bus safety training by their nonpublic school. The nonpublic schools may use the STEP Academy's school transportation safety education curriculum. The nonpublic school must certify to the STEP Academy's school transportation safety director that all students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 have received the appropriate training.

### **III. CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR**

- A. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The STEP Academy's general student behavior rules are in effect for students on school buses.
- B. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the STEP Academy under adopted administrative discipline procedures. In addition, all school bus/bus stop misconduct will be reported to the STEP Academy's transportation safety director. Serious misconduct may be reported to local law enforcement.
  1. School Bus and Bus Stop Rules. The STEP Academy school bus safety rules are to be posted on every bus. If these rules are broken, the STEP Academy's discipline procedures are to be followed. Consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges. It is the school bus driver's responsibility to report unacceptable behavior to the STEP Academy's Transportation Office/School Office.
  2. Rules at the Bus Stop

- a. Get to your bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pick up time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students.
- b. Respect the property of others while waiting at your bus stop.
- c. Keep your arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- d. Use appropriate language.
- e. Stay away from the street, road or highway when waiting for the bus.
- f. Wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus.
- g. After getting off the bus, move away from the bus.
- h. If you must cross the street, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.
- i. No fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay.
- j. No use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

### 3. Rules on the Bus

- a. Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
- b. Sit in your seat facing forward.
- c. Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- d. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- e. Keep your arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- f. No fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay.
- g. Do not throw any object.
- h. No eating, drinking or use of tobacco or drugs.
- i. Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.
- j. Do not damage the school bus.

#### 4. Consequences

- a. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all regular and late routes. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with cocurricular and extracurricular events (for example, field trips or competitions) will be in the sole discretion of the STEP Academy. Parents or guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges.

##### (1) Elementary ( 6)

1st offense – warning

2nd offense – 3 school-day suspension from riding the bus

3rd offense – 5 school-day suspension from riding the bus

4th offense – 10 school-day suspension from riding the bus/meeting with parent

Further offenses – individually considered. Students may be suspended for longer periods of time, including the remainder of the school year.

##### (2) Secondary (7-12)

1st offense – warning

2nd offense – 5 school-day suspension from riding the bus

3rd offense – 10 school-day suspension from riding the bus

4th offense – 20 school-day suspension from riding the bus/meeting with parent

5th offense – suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year

Note: When any student goes 60 transportation days without a report, the student's consequences may start over at the first offense.

##### (3) Other Discipline

Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school also may result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

##### (4) Records

Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual school building and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of student misbehavior on a school bus or in a bus-loading or unloading area that causes an immediate and substantial danger to the student or surrounding persons or property will be provided by the STEP Academy to the Department of Public Safety in accordance with state and federal law.

(5) Vandalism/Bus Damage

Students damaging school buses will be responsible for the damages. Failure to pay such damages (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks may result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

(6) Notice

School bus and bus stop rules and consequences for violations of these rules will be reviewed with students annually and copies of these rules will be made available to students. School bus rules are to be posted on each school bus.

(7) Criminal Conduct

In cases involving criminal conduct (for example, assault, weapons, possession or vandalism), the appropriate STEP Academy personnel and local law enforcement officials will be informed.

#### **IV. PARENT AND GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

A. Parent and Guardian Notification

The STEP Academy school bus and bus stop rules will be provided to each family. Parents and guardians are asked to review the rules with their children.

B. Parents/Guardians Responsibilities for Transportation Safety

Parents/Guardians are responsible to:

1. Become familiar with STEP Academy rules, policies, regulations and the principles of school bus safety, and thoroughly review them with their children;

2. Support safe riding and walking practices, and recognize that students are responsible for their actions;
3. Communicate safety concerns to their school administrators;
4. Monitor bus stops, if possible;
5. Have their children to the bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives;
6. Have their children properly dressed for the weather; and
7. Have a plan in case the bus is late.

## **V. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. School bus drivers shall have a valid Class A, B, or C Minnesota driver's license with a school bus endorsement. A person possessing a valid driver's license, without a school bus endorsement, may drive a vehicle with a seating capacity of 10 or fewer persons used as a school bus, but not outwardly equipped or identified as a school bus as set forth in Section VII.B., below. Drivers with a valid Class D driver's license, without a school bus endorsement, may operate a "Type A" school bus as set forth in Section VII.C., below.
- B. The STEP Academy shall conduct mandatory drug and alcohol testing of all STEP Academy bus drivers and bus driver applicants in accordance with state and federal law and STEP Academy policy.

## **VI. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING**

### **A. Training**

All new school bus drivers shall be provided with pre-service training, including in-vehicle (actual driving) instruction before transporting students and shall meet the competency testing specified in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual. All school bus drivers shall receive in-service training annually. The STEP Academy shall retain on file an annual individual school bus driver "evaluation certification" form for each STEP Academy driver as contained in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.

*[Note: The Model School Bus Driver Training Manual is available online through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page.]*

### **B. Evaluation**

School bus drivers with a Class D license will be evaluated annually and all other bus drivers will be assessed periodically for the following competencies:

1. Safely operate the type of school bus the driver will be driving;
2. Understand student behavior, including issues relating to students with disabilities;
3. Ensure orderly conduct of students on the bus and handling incidents of misconduct appropriately;
4. Know and understand relevant laws, rules of the road and local school bus safety policies;
5. Handle emergency situations; and
6. Safely load and unload students.

The evaluation must include completion of an individual “school bus driver evaluation form” (road test evaluation) as contained in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.

## **VII. OPERATING RULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. General Operating Rules**

1. School buses shall be operated in accordance with state traffic and school bus safety laws and the procedures contained in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.

***[Note: The Model School Bus Driver Training Manual is available online through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page.]***

2. Only students assigned to the school bus by the STEP Academy shall be transported. The number of students or other authorized passengers transported in a school bus shall not be more than the legal capacity for the bus. No person shall be allowed to stand when the bus is in motion.
3. The parent/guardian may designate, pursuant to STEP Academy policy, a day care facility, respite care facility, the residence of a relative or the residence of a person chosen by the parent or guardian as the address of the student for transportation purposes. The address must be in the attendance area of the assigned school and meet all other eligibility requirements.
4. Bus drivers must minimize, to the extent practical, the idling of school bus engines and exposure of children to diesel exhaust fumes.
5. Bus drivers must park and load school buses at a sufficient distance from school air-intake systems to avoid diesel fumes from being drawn into the systems.

***[Note: A STEP Academy is not required to comply with Section VII.A.5. if the school board determines that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety, or are not cost effective.]***

**B. Type III Vehicles**

1. Type III vehicles are restricted to passenger cars, station wagons, vans, and buses having a maximum manufacturer's rated seating capacity of 10 or fewer people including the driver and a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less. A van or bus converted to a seating capacity of 10 or fewer and placed in service on or after August 1, 1999, must have been originally manufactured to comply with the passenger safety standards.
2. Type III vehicles must be painted a color other than national school bus yellow.
3. Type III vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.
4. A Type III vehicle cannot be older than 12 years old unless excepted by state and federal law.
5. If a Type III vehicle is STEP Academy owned, the STEP Academy name will be clearly marked on the side of the vehicle. The Type III vehicle must not have the words "school bus" in any location on the exterior of the vehicle or in any interior location visible to a motorist.
6. A "Type III school bus" and "Type III Head Start bus" must not be outwardly equipped and identified as a Type A, B, C, or D bus.
7. Eight-lamp warning systems and stop arms must not be installed or used on Type III vehicles.
8. Type III vehicles must be equipped with mirrors as required by law.
9. Any Type III vehicle may not stop traffic and may not load or unload before making a complete stop and disengaging gears by shifting into neutral or park. Any Type III vehicle used to transport students must not load or unload so that a pupil has to cross the road, except where not possible or impractical, then the driver or assistant must escort a pupil across the road. If the driver escorts the student across the road, then the motor must be stopped, the ignition key removed, the brakes set, and the vehicle otherwise rendered immobile.
10. Any Type III vehicle used to transport students must carry emergency equipment including:
  - a. Fire extinguisher. A minimum of one 10BC rated dry chemical type fire extinguisher is required. The extinguisher must be mounted in a bracket,



and must be located in the driver's compartment and be readily accessible to the driver and passengers. A pressure indicator is required and must be easily read without removing the extinguisher from its mounted position.

- b. First aid kit and body fluids cleanup kit. A minimum of a ten-unit first aid kit and a body fluids cleanup kit is required. They must be contained in removable, moisture- and dust-proof containers mounted in an accessible place within the driver's compartment and must be marked to indicate their identity and location.
  - c. A Type III bus must contain at least three red reflectorized triangle road warning devices. Liquid burning "pot type" flares are not allowed.
  - d. Passenger cars and station wagons may carry a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, and warning triangles in the trunk or trunk area of the vehicle if a label in the driver and front passenger area clearly indicates the location of these items.
11. Students will not be regularly transported in private vehicles that are not state inspected as Type III vehicles. Only emergency, unscheduled transportation may be conducted in vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or fewer without meeting the requirements for a Type III vehicle. The STEP Academy has no system of inspection for private vehicles.
12. All drivers of Type III vehicles will be licensed drivers and will be familiar with the use of required emergency equipment. The STEP Academy will not knowingly allow a person to operate a Type III vehicle if the person has been convicted of an offense that disqualifies the person from operating a school bus.

C. Type A-II "Activity" Buses Driven by Employees with Class D Driver's License

1. The holder of a Class D driver's license, without a school bus endorsement, may operate a Type A-II school bus under the following conditions:
- a. The operator is an employee of the STEP Academy or an independent contractor with whom the STEP Academy contracts for the school bus and is not solely hired to provide transportation services under this paragraph.
  - b. The operator drives the school bus only from points of origin to points of destination, not including home-to-school trips to pick up or drop off students.
  - c. The operator is prohibited from using the eight-light system.
  - d. The operator has submitted to a background check and physical examination as required by Minn. Stat. § 171.321, Subd. 2.

- e. The operator has a valid driver's license and has not sustained a conviction of a disqualifying offense as set forth in Minn. Stat. § 171.02, Subd. 2a(b).
  - f. The operator has been trained in the proper use of child safety restraints as set forth in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's "Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses" in addition to the training required in Part VI., above.
2. The STEP Academy shall maintain annual certification of the requirements listed in this section for each Class D license operator.
  3. A school bus operated under this section must bear a current certificate of inspection.
  4. The word "School" on the front and rear of the bus must be covered by a sign that reads "Activities" when the bus is being operated under authority of this section.

### **VIII. STEP ACADEMY EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

- A. If possible, school bus drivers or their supervisors shall call "911" or the local emergency phone number in the event of a serious emergency.
- B. School bus drivers shall meet the emergency training requirements contained in Unit III "Crash & Emergency Preparedness" of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual. This includes procedures in the event of a crash (accident).

*[Note: The Model School Bus Driver Training Manual is available online through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page.]*

- C. School bus drivers and bus assistants for special education students requiring special transportation service because of their handicapping condition shall be trained in basic first aid procedures, shall within one month after the effective date of assignment participate in a program of in-service training on the proper methods for dealing with the specific needs and problems of pupils with disabilities, assist pupils with disabilities on and off the bus when necessary for their safe ingress and egress from the bus; and ensure that protective safety devices are in use and fastened properly.
- D. Emergency Health Information shall be maintained on the school bus for students requiring special transportation service because of their handicapping condition. The information shall state:
  1. the pupil's name and address;
  2. the nature of the pupil's disabilities;

3. emergency health care information; and
4. the names and telephone numbers of the pupil's physician, parents, guardians, or custodians, and some person other than the pupil's parents or custodians who can be contacted in case of an emergency.

## **IX. STEP ACADEMY VEHICLE MAINTENANCE STANDARDS**

- A. All school vehicles shall be maintained in safe operating conditions through a systematic preventive maintenance and inspection program adopted or approved by the STEP Academy.
- B. All school vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.
- C. A copy of the current daily pre-trip inspection report must be carried in the bus. Daily pre-trip inspections shall be maintained on file in accordance with the STEP Academy's record retention schedule. Prompt reports of defects to be immediately corrected will be submitted.
- D. Daily post-trip inspections shall be performed to check for any children or lost items remaining on the bus and for vandalism.

## **X. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY DIRECTOR**

The school board has designated an individual to serve as the STEP Academy's school transportation safety director. The school transportation safety director shall have day-to-day responsibility for pupil transportation safety, including transportation of nonpublic school children when provided by the STEP Academy. The school transportation safety director will assure that this policy is periodically reviewed to ensure that it conforms to law. The school transportation safety director shall certify annually to the school board that each school bus driver meets the school bus driver training competencies required by Minn. Stat. § 171.321, Subd. 4. The transportation safety director also shall annually verify or ensure that the private contractor utilized by the school has verified the validity of the driver's license of each person who transports students for the STEP Academy with the National Driver's Register or the Department of Public Safety. The school transportation safety director also shall confirm annually to the superintendent that students have received school bus safety training in accordance with state law. The name, address and telephone number of the school transportation safety director are on file in the STEP Academy office. Any questions regarding student transportation or this policy may be addressed to the school transportation safety director.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 123B.42 (Textbooks; Individual Instructor or Cooperative Learning Material; Standard Tests)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.885 (Diesel School Buses; Operation of Engine; Parking)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.90 (School Bus Safety Training)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.91 (STEP Academy Bus Safety Responsibilities)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.01, Subd. 6(5) (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.454 (Type III Vehicle Standards)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.4582 (Reportable Offense on School Buses)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.02, Subd 2a (Licenses; Types, Endorsements, Restrictions)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.321 (Qualifications of a School Bus Driver)  
Minn. Rules Part 7470.1000-7470.1700 (School Bus Inspection)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 416 (Drug and Alcohol Testing)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 707 (Transportation of Public Students)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 708 (Transportation of Nonpublic Students)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 710 (Extracurricular Transportation)

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