



Superintendent's Circular

NUMBER:
TRN-02
Version 01

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & DISCIPLINE

This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version

HEAD OF SCHOOL/PRINCIPAL EXPECTATIONS

The school bus is considered an "extension of the classroom" in terms of expected student behavior. The school is responsible for working with students and parents/guardians to address behaviors of students and parents/guardians that take place on or are related to bus service that are not consistent with school and district policies. This policy reinforces the Standards of Behavior for Boston Public School students. The head of school/principal is responsible for implementing the Code of Conduct and Standards of Behavior as they apply to students and parents/guardians while utilizing school transportation and the MBTA. The head of school/principal will also communicate student/parent/guardian obligations at the start of the school year via student presentations and notification to parents/guardians through School-Based Rules. Please note that the Code of Conduct includes procedures for the denial of transportation.

The head of school/principal will apply all approved Boston Public Schools policies and procedures to matters of regular transportation service and field trips, athletics, and late bus runs.

INCIDENT REPORTING AND RESPONSE

The head of school/principal will report all incidents, maintain all records, and take appropriate action as prescribed in applicable Superintendent's Circulars, including but not limited to any state or federal reporting (e.g., mandated reporting to DCF or the SSDR report for DESE, etc.). In the event of a school transportation incident resulting in student injury, the school administrator will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) and provide appropriate information in accordance with Superintendent's Circular FSE-05, Medical Emergency Management. The head of school/principal will maintain copies of all incident reports filed by drivers and utilize reports for remedial actions.

BPS school buses are equipped with two cameras. One camera faces out from the bus forward to record oncoming traffic. The second camera is focused inward on the bus from the front of the bus. Cameras do not record sound. Only in emergency situations (e.g. active missing student investigation) may camera footage be accessed in real time and only by Department of Transportation personnel. When an incident is reported, depending on the nature of the incident, a review of video footage of the reported incident may be requested by a school, a parent/guardian, or a member of the district transportation team. In most situations, student conduct investigations will rely on incident reports from students and adults on board the bus, rather than camera footage. Any requests for bus footage must run through the BPS Transportation Department. Cameras have limited video storage capacity that typically store 7 (seven) to 10 (ten) days of footage, depending on bus usage. Cameras are not actively monitored. Neither BPS DOT nor the bus vendor will use cameras for any purpose other than investigating specific

allegations.

When incidents occur that are related to bus transportation, BPS DOT can work with schools on implementing solutions to support successful student transportation on BPS buses. Some strategies that have been effective in the past include but are not limited to school-led mediations with parents/guardians, students, bus drivers, bus monitors, and school staff; school-led in depth training for drivers and/or monitors; school assigned bus seating plans; addition of a bus attendant by the school to the bus. In very limited circumstances, requiring approval of the Director of BPS DOT, a student, driver, or monitor may be reassigned. Such reassignment will be a last resort only after other strategies have been exhausted. This helps ensure that students are fully supported in learning how to successfully navigate yellow bus transportation.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH DRIVERS & MONITORS AND MANAGING BUS ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

The head of school/principal or their designee is responsible for monitoring transportation service and the performance of school bus drivers and monitors. This includes daily one-on-one contact by school staff with a driver upon their arrival and departure from a school. Heads of school/principals are advised and encouraged to make all efforts to maintain a positive relationship with all drivers and bus monitors and to also endeavor to work constructively with all BPS and Transdev staff with whom they come in contact throughout the school year.

School administrative staff are responsible for managing safe and efficient bus arrival and dismissal processes. All buses assigned to

a school are together scheduled to be fully loaded or unloaded within a ten-minute window. To be on time for all subsequent trips, in the morning all buses must be unloaded and depart the school by the school's bell time. In the afternoon, all buses assigned to a school must load and depart the school by 10 minutes after the bell time.

When arriving at schools, buses may not allow students to unload until a member of the school staff is present to meet students. This ensures that a school staff member is present to take responsibility for students before students exit the bus. Schools are responsible for maintaining up-to-date bus rosters and ensuring students are placed on their assigned bus during bus dismissal. BPS Transportation Department operations support is available to review bus loading and unloading procedures upon request.

Heads of school/principals are encouraged to make time available to meet with drivers who wish to confer with them on a voluntary basis throughout the school year for the purpose of maintaining their transportation safety/discipline program. Heads of school/principals may provide drivers with a seating plan for each bus, but they should work constructively with drivers and monitors in the implementation of such a plan. If a seating plan is put in place, students should be instructed to remain in their assigned seats throughout the trip.

The head of school/principal or their designee should regularly interview students to make assessments of the quality of transportation service and are also asked to monitor ridership and notify BPS Transportation if any bus assignments are not being utilized. Schools can provide student opt out information in

our [Support Portal](#). This link provides a walkthrough. We ask schools to utilize our Support Portal to ensure accountability within our team and support our effort to reduce follow-up times.

The head of school/principal or their designee may occasionally ride school buses for first-hand observation of operations, but notification to the Transportation Department must be made in advance to ensure that buses are within capacity requirements for ridership.

Monitors assigned through the special education process are essential members of a student's support team. Schools are responsible for training bus monitors on IEP required student specific supports. Monitors must be included in students' support teams for training on an ongoing basis to be prepared to best meet the needs of our students who ride the bus and to help ensure students can succeed in the least restrictive environment. Schools may contact the BPS DOT Monitors Unit to arrange meetings with monitors throughout the school year.

Please remember that bus drivers and bus monitors are important members of our school community. When they are at your school, per district policy, they are permitted to use restroom facilities. Bus drivers and bus monitors are expected to present identification to enter any building. Just like for all other members of our school and district staff, please ensure that these team members have access to bathroom facilities in your building as needed.

SAFETY EDUCATION AND EVACUATION DRILLS

The head of school/principal will support all safety education efforts relative to transportation and initiate programs within the

first week of the school year and throughout the school year.

School bus evacuation drills are to be conducted in accordance with M.G.L., Chapter 90, Section 9B, which mandates school bus evacuation instruction and drills. Evidence of completed instruction and drills must be kept on file by the head of school/principal. BPS Transportation, Transdev Safety, and BPS Safety Services personnel will assist school administrators in conducting bus evacuation drills as required by M.G.L. Chapter 90, section 9B.

ROLE OF THE BPS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

- The Transportation Department acts as the liaison between the bus company, school personnel, parents/guardians, BPS Safety Services, and Boston Police Department.
- The Transportation Department monitors contractual compliance by vendors relative to the employment of drivers and driver conduct.
- The Transportation Department records all complaints regarding driver behavior and forwards them to the company for remedial action by the bus company. The Director of Transportation may, in extreme circumstances, order suspension or reassignment of drivers subject to consultation with the bus vendor and the collective bargaining agreement between drivers and bus company.
- The Transportation Department completes bus routing and planning to create efficient bus schedules that minimize ride time for students and optimize deployment of drivers, monitors, and buses. Where necessary, the Transportation Department will revise routes or pick-up points to reduce

potential safety problems.

- The Transportation Department provides parents/guardians with advice relative to procedures to assist in the resolution of transportation issues.
- The Transportation Department notifies the head of school/principal of any school bus accident, including a list of the students onboard the bus and any other relevant information. In the event an accident occurs after school hours, the Transportation Department will attempt to notify the Head of School/Principal at home.
- In the event of a school transportation accident or incident resulting in student injury, BPS Transportation implements the following procedures:
 - Ensures Transdev Safety staff has properly followed procedures and notified police or emergency medical services as necessary.
 - Notifies the school building administrator, principal leader, assistant superintendent of operations, and operational leader, relaying all available information. Building administrators are then responsible for notifying parents/guardians.
- If the building administrator or other school-based staff is not available, BPS Transportation Department staff will notify parents/guardians or emergency contact person.

ROLE OF THE BUS COMPANY – TRANSDEV TRANSPORTATION

The bus company will comply with all requirements contained in its contract with the School Committee, its collective bargaining agreements with its staff, and all Massachusetts laws and

regulations as they pertain to school bus safety and reporting.

The bus company will adhere to the Incident Response & Report Process as outlined below:

1. The Transdev Safety Desk will log all calls and deployment requests sent into the Safety Desk by drivers or safety staff, BPS Transportation, or others and will submit those along with any incident reports generated after an incident.
2. In an emergency, Transdev Safety Desk will call BPS or EMS and deploy Transdev road safety supervisors to all serious incidents and accidents. Transdev Safety Desk will notify BPS Transportation staff immediately upon learning of any serious incident and will continue to supply timely details from the scene as they become available. In the event of a school transportation incident resulting in student injury after normal operating hours, Transdev Safety Desk staff and BPS Transportation Call Center staff will assist school administrators in the parent/guardian notification process.
3. Transdev drivers will provide as much *specific* information as possible over the radio to Safety Desk and in their written reports, mainly the names and student numbers of involved students. Drivers should also fill out incident reports and give copies to school administrators and their branch supervisors daily. All incident reports are logged on a computer database at the bus company.
4. Transdev safety staff and BPS Transportation work together to communicate with heads of school/principals and police where necessary to assist in the resolution of incidents. Heads of school/principals are required to contact parents/guardians and discipline students when necessary.

The bus company will instruct drivers to meet with heads of school/principals after the "dry runs" of bus routes before the opening of school. Heads of school/principals should be prepared to discuss their student transportation safety/discipline program with drivers at that time and throughout the year. Drivers may also be made available to meet with the head of school/principal on an ongoing basis. Arrangements for meetings can be made by contacting the BPS Transportation Department.

Transdev road safety supervisors and driver trainers will inspect the safety and accessibility of pick-up and drop-off locations throughout the city as requested.

For more information about this circular, contact:

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Mary Skipper, Superintendent