

# **School Board of Levy County Transportation Department**



## **Bus Drivers Handbook**

**Revised and Board Approved**

**August 25, 2020**



**The School Board of Levy County, Florida**  
**Transportation Department**  
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**School Bus Driver's Handbook**  
**Version 1.4**  
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**Florida State Board of Education – Administrative Rules**  
**State of Florida - School Bus Driver's Handbook**  
**School Board of Levy County – Board Policies**

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### **Introduction:**

Transporting students to school and field/activity trips is an important service of the Levy County public school system. On average a child spends 3,120 hours on a school bus by the time they graduate. They learn how to follow rules, self-control, and social skills on their ride to and from school. The bus driver is a significant role model for students and is typically the first and last representative of the school district that they have contact with. The school bus is an extension of the classroom and the service of transportation is a bigger part of this educational institution than just a ride home. The school bus is a “rolling bill board” for the school district. The citizens of Levy County may assess the school system from their experiences from the impact school buses and bus drivers have on their children and neighborhoods. Bus drivers are held to a high standard by parents, students, and people in traffic.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to educate all students in a safe environment and to graduate them ready for college and career success.

**Job Goal:**

To safely and efficiently transport students to and from their school site and/or special events.

**Qualifications:**

1. High school diploma or equivalent
2. Possess a valid Florida Commercial Driver's License; Class B with air brakes
  - A. Passenger endorsement
  - B. School bus endorsement

**Physical Requirements:**

1. Heavy Work; Exerting up to 100 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 50 pounds of force frequently and/or up to 20 pounds of force as needed to move objects.
2. Must pass a medical physical as required by Rule 6A-3.0171 (i), FAC
3. Must pass a dexterity test every thirteen (13) months.

Note: It is the bus driver's responsibility to keep their medical physical up to date.

**Performance Responsibilities:**

1. Comply with all state and local traffic laws and School Board policies and procedures relative to the safe operation of a school bus.
2. Inspect the school bus to ensure it is in safe operating condition before leaving on a route or trip.
3. Assume responsibility of his/her passengers including loading and unloading.
4. Instruct students in safety precautions and practices.
5. Maintain appropriate student discipline and report unruly behavior to the School Principal.
6. Sweep and keep the bus clean, both inside and outside, at all times.
7. Prepare FEFP and other required operational reports accurately and submits in a timely manner.
8. Make recommendation to improve school bus routes, stops, and loading/unloading zones at schools.
9. Use effective, positive interpersonal communication skills.
10. Report to the Lead Mechanic, or appropriate Administrator, any defects in the bus or repairs needed for the safe operation of the bus.
11. Complete required in-service and training programs.
12. Perform other incidental tasks with the goals and objectives of this position.



### **Dress Code:**

- School board ID badge is to be worn.
- All drivers will wear appropriate undergarments (including bras for females).
- Clothing shall cover all undergarments and body.
- Shoes must be worn which have closed toes and heels (no sandals or sling-backs).
- Shorts should not be shorter than three (3) inches above kneecap.
- Jeans should be in good repair (no rips or tears).
- Skirts and dresses must be long enough to touch the knee cap when standing.

### **Not Acceptable:**

- Any shoe that may interfere with the safe operation of the school bus or other duties of the school bus driver.
- Shoes with platform soles.
- Shoes with heels may not be more than two (2) inches high.
- Tank tops and spaghetti straps.
- Clothing that exposes undergarments or body parts.
- See through clothing.
- Tight fitting lycra/spandex type clothing.
- Clothing with political, adult, or unprofessional slogans.

**Note:** Choose clothing that will not expose undergarments or body parts when sitting, bending, kneeling, or squatting.

### **Workplace Safety:**

Health and safety at work is everybody's responsibility.

- Report all injuries (minor or major).
- Bus drivers are not to cross the safety barrier markings (yellow lines) in the garage.
- When entering and exiting the school bus, use the handrail.
- When carrying items on or off the bus, do not block your view of your feet and where you step.
- As you walk, keep an eye on the floor in front of you.
- Use a flashlight when it is dark.
- Never bend at the waist and lift heavy objects up with your back.
- Never jerk your body around when lifting.
- Do not clean up body fluids without personal protective equipment.
- If you have a safety concern, report it to your supervisor.

## **Passenger Management:**

### **“The Do’s”**

- Make a positive first impression with students and parents.
- Assign seats for all students.
- Make your first contact with parents about their child before a discipline problem occurs.
- Learn the names of the students who ride your bus.
- Establish procedures and routines that are consistently followed.
- “Catch” students doing something good and thank them for it.
- Pick your battles.
- Act like an adult and a professional.

### **“The Do-Not’s”**

- Grab Students, force them to physically sit down or get up, etc.
- Strike, slap, or spank a student.
- Pull or force an item from them.
- Use sarcasm, ridicule, or intimidation.
- Lose (reveal) your temper.
- Get in a power struggle.
- Escalate a situation.
- Leave students.

### **“Use of Force”**

Use of force means to restrict someone’s freedom of liberty or movement.

**Note:** Bullying will not be tolerated.

## **Passenger Management:**

### **The Three R's:**

Rules – Establish clearly defined expectations.

Reason – Handle situations in a reasonable manner.

Rapport – Build a positive relationship with the students on your route.

### **Suggestions:**

- Acknowledge students as they board the school bus.
- Smile and be friendly.
- When students feel you care about them, they will gain respect for you, your rules, and you're driving.
- Reacting with frustration only adds "fuel to the fire".
- Use an authoritative voice, do not scream with emotion.
- Give the student time to react.
- Present students with choices.
- Do not threaten students with phone calls to parents or referrals if you do not plan to follow through with it.
- Reassign seats to students that are disruptive.
- Don't let situations get out of control.

### **Things to Remember:**

- Be fair and consistent with all students. If you treat certain students as "favorites" they will take advantage of it and the rest of the students will notice.
- Problems are opportunities. Example: If a student changes seats while the bus is in motion, it's an opportunity to remind them to wear their seat belts.
- Before acting, consider the impact of your words and actions on students.
- Do not take or grab personal belongings from students. Direct them to put the item away. If the student doesn't comply, use the necessary discipline.
- Rely on facts rather than assumptions.
- This is an educational institution and the school bus is an extension of the classroom.

**Note:** Only the Principal or designee can remove a student from riding a school bus. Never put a student off the bus except at their assigned stop. Students should not be returned to school unless it's necessary to continue the route safely.

## **The Parent Contact:**

An effective tool in passenger management is the parent contact. Parents appreciate bus driver communication.

## **Suggestions for calling parents**

- Document your phone calls so you have a record.
- Know the parents name; don't assume it's the same as the child.
- Always begin by asking, "Is this a good time for us to talk?"
- Make your first calls to parents a positive one.
- Introduce yourself.
- Never lose your temper, never use profanity or sarcasm.
- Keep a relaxed positive tone.
- Have notes written out ahead of time with the points you want to discuss.
- Share concrete observations, not judgments.
- Don't get bogged down with every detail.
- Maintain confidentiality (Don't discuss other students by name).
- Be a good listener, don't cut the parent off.
- Apologize if you were wrong (This gains respect).
- Don't offer the surveillance video to the parents to view, that can't happen. Say, "Only Administrators can view the video." (if the parent asks)

## **Guidelines for Writing Bus Conduct Reports**

- Submit conduct reports as soon as possible.
- Write what you witnessed or what was reported to you.
- Write the facts, not opinions.
- Make brief statements; "to the point".
- Protect the identity of other students. Put their names on a separate sheet and attach to the conduct report.

**Best Practice:** Hand bus conduct reports to the Principal or his/her designee. This gives you an opportunity to discuss the situation.

**Note:** Drivers will make themselves available to help Administrators with investigations.

### **Bus Sentences:**

1. It is very important for students to always sit upright, face forward (knees and nose), and have their backs firmly against the seat.
2. Throwing paper, trash, pencils or other items on the bus can be very dangerous and may cause other students to become angry.
3. Arguing, being disrespectful toward the driver or failing to follow directions could quickly lead to an office referral or parent conference.
4. Phone volume that can be heard by other students or the bus driver is not allowed on the bus and a single ear bud is strongly recommended thereby allowing directions from the driver to be clearly understood.
5. Phone use for any student or for the entire bus can be revoked by the driver if it is deemed to be a distraction or safety issue.
6. Blue tooth speakers, skate boards, a sports ball or toy, food or drink, blankets or pillows, knives or weapons, cigarette lighters or other items designated by the driver are not allowed on the bus.
7. Seat belts are required by state law and all students should constantly be buckled up with all available slack immediately removed from the lap belt.
8. Back packs should be removed before sitting in the seat and should be stored on the riders lap or on the floor beside their feet.
9. Drivers have full authority and requirement to assign and enforce a seating chart at all times and any student who is found out of their seat should expect consequences.
10. The aisle should always be kept clear of back packs and student's feet or knees to assure free movement during loading and unloading.
11. Hands, hair and heads should be kept inside the windows of the bus at all times in order to prevent accidental injury.
12. Students are expected to be at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled pick up time each morning.

**Appropriate assignment: Grades (1-3 ONE) – (4-6 FIVE) – (7-12 TWENTY FIVE)**

### **Distracted Driving:**

Bus drivers may not use a cell phone or electronic hand-held devices while operating a school bus. This includes, but not limited to answering or making phone calls, instant messages, text messages, e-mail, electronic communications, and GPS navigation. The only acceptable use of a cell phone is to pull over in a safe area, set the parking brake and put the bus in neutral.

### **Seat Belt:**

Bus drivers must wear their seat belt properly at all times when the bus is in motion.

### **Two-way Radio:**

The two-way radio is to be used for school bus business only. The school bus driver will use no profane or off-color remarks on the two-way radio.

- Channel two (2) is to be used on school campuses.
- Channel one (1) is to be used everywhere else.

### **Driver's Storage:**

- No loose items are allowed in the driver's compartment.
- No aerosol cans or other containers with flammable or volatile contents.
- No garbage bags or cans.
- Cleaning supplies must be kept in the overhead compartment.

### **Speed Limits:**

- School bus drivers shall always drive at a safe speed.
- Adjust your speed for the current road conditions.
- Never exceed the posted speed limit.
- Speed for school buses on all Levy County school campuses is 10 mph.

### **Strobe Light:**

School buses are to run the strobe light during daylight hours and inclement weather.

**No Right Turn on Red:** School buses are not permitted to turn right on red after stopping.

### **Engine Idling:**

- Engine idling should not exceed five (5) minutes (excluding pre and post trip inspections).
- Engine idling should not exceed fifteen (15) minutes when ambient temperature is below forty (40) degrees.
- Engines are to be shut off while parked on school grounds and while waiting for passengers to load.

### **Items Not Allowed on the School Bus:**

- Illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products
- Weapons or imitations (including toy weapons)
- Glass containers
- Balloons that may block the driver's view

### **The Pre-Trip Inspection:**

Every school bus must be inspected before every use. Bus drivers are given fifteen (15) minutes to perform a pre-trip inspection, this is the industry standard. Bus drivers should inspect their school bus by looking, hearing, and smelling for problems. A proper pre-trip inspection can reduce the potential for failure. Fill out the pre-trip inspection form after you inspect the bus. The form may remind you of an item you missed.

- Report all repairs and defects to the Transportation department.
- If an out of service item is found report it to the transportation department and use a spare bus.
- Fill out a defect form and leave it on the driver's seat.
- If the defect form does not have repairs noted by a technician on the when you return for the next route the bus cannot be used.
- Never use a school bus with an "out of service" sign posted in the window.

**Note:** School buses needing repair will be parked at the designated school.

## Pre-trip Inspection

### Under Hood

#### Hoses and Belts:

##### Hoses:

- Check that hoses are properly routed and secure.
- There should be no evidence of leaks (listen for leaks on air hoses), cracks, frays, or dry rot.

##### Belts:

- Check that belts are properly routed and secure.
- There should be no evidence of wear, cracks, or frays.

Check Fluids / Leaks: Check that the engine has no evidence of leaks or dripping fluids.

##### Fuel/DEF Fluid:

- Check that the school bus has enough fuel for the route/trip. Fuel should be topped off when level reaches half-tank.
- Check that the school bus has enough diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) for the route/trip, if equipped. Diesel exhaust fluid should be topped off when you bring the school bus for the thirty (30) day inspection.

##### Engine Oil:

- Identify the dipstick and remove it from the dipstick tube and wipe it dry.
- Reinsert the dipstick completely. Remove it and read the oil level.
- Oil should be above the add mark.

##### Coolant:

- Identify the coolant reservoir.
- Check that coolant is visible in the sight glass. Some buses are equipped with a transparent coolant reservoir with an add mark.
- Do not add water to the cooling system.

**Note:** Do not open or inspect items in the engine compartment with the engine running.



## Pre-trip Inspection

### **Driver's Compartment**

Start Engine: Engine starts properly.

Dome Lights: Check that all passenger and driver's dome lights are operating properly.

Horn: Beep horn and listen that it works properly.

Windshield: Check the windshield for damage or cracks; there should be no obstructions, decals, or stickers. Windshield should be clean. A dirty windshield causes fatigue.

Heater and Defroster: Check that the heaters and defrosters work on low and high. Feel if the defroster is blowing.

Radio: Make sure to turn the radio on and that it is on the proper channel (Channel two (2) to speak with schools, channel one (1) to speak with transportation).

First Aid Kit: Check the first aid kit to see if secure and has supplies.

Body Fluid Kit: Check the body fluid kit is secure and has supplies.

Student and Bus Records: Check to make sure the student and bus records is present and up to date.

Service Door: Check to make sure the service door is opening and closing properly. Check the windows in the service door for damage or cracks; there should be no obstructions, decals, or stickers. Windows should be clean. Dirty windows cause fatigue.

Mirrors: Check the mirrors for damage or cracks; there should be no obstructions, decals, or stickers. Check the mirrors are adjusted properly. Mirrors should be clean. Dirty mirrors cause fatigue.

Reflective Triangles: Check that there are three (3) triangles and they are securely mounted.

Fire Extinguisher: Check the gauge to make sure it is in the green and it has a current inspection sticker. Check to see if it is securely mounted.

## Outside Walk-Around

Front Bumper Cross Arm: Check to see that the front bumper crossing arm is secure and operates properly. Listen for leaks.

Tail and Headlights: Check that lights are operating properly.

Stop Arms and Stop Arm Lights: Check to make sure both stop arms are secure and the operation of the stop arms and that all stop arm lights are working. Listen for leaks.

Red Student Stop Lights: Check to make sure that both front and rear red student stop lights are operating properly. Check the lenses for cracks.

Strobe and Clearance Lights: Check to make sure that clearance lights are operating properly. They should be red on the rear of the bus, amber everywhere else. Check that strobe light is working properly.

Four Way Flashers: Check four way flashers to make sure they are operating properly.

Under Vehicle Check: Check for leaking, smoking, and strong or unusual smells.

Exhaust System: Check to see that there are no obstructions in the tailpipe.

Wheels and Tires: Check that the wheels are secure. All lug nuts are present and tight. Shiny metal and rust lines are a sign the lugs may be loose. Check that hub oil seal and rear axle seals are not leaking. Valve stems should not be damaged and have a cap. Tires should not have any damage, slashes, cuts, or bubbles.

Body and Windows: Check to make sure all bus windows is not cracked; there are no obstructions, decals, or stickers. Dirty windows cause fatigue. Check there is no body damage, no sharp edges, and no vandalism.

## Pre-trip Inspection

### Inside Walk-Through

Student Seats: Check that seat bottoms are not loose, ripped, cut, or vandalized. Check that seats are secure and seat belts (if equipped) are not tangled, tied in knots, or pushed down into the seat.

Emergency Door Buzzer: Check that the emergency door buzzer operates properly.

Student Warning Lights: Check that the front and rear student warning lights are working properly. (Student warning lights will not operate with service door open.)

Back-up Lights: Check that the backup lights are working and back up alarm is audible.

Brake Lights: Check that the brake lights are working.

Directional Signals: Check that the front and rear, left and right directional signals are working properly. Check that the front and rear four way flashers are working properly.

Wheelchair Lift: Wheelchair lift (if equipped) should deploy, lower, raise, and stow properly.

## Pre-Trip Inspection

### Departure

Oil and Air Pressure Gauges: Check that oil and air pressures are at the correct operating levels.

Temperature and Fuel Gauges: Coolant temperature should start rising by the end of the pre-trip inspection. Check there is enough fuel to run the route or trip. (Best practice is to fill the bus with fuel when it reaches half tank.)

Ammeter and Voltmeter Gauges: Voltmeter should read 12 to 14 volts.

Driver Seat and Seat Belt: Drivers seat belt should not be torn and buckle should latch and unlatch properly.

Parking Brake: Parking brake should hold (bus doesn't move) with bus in gear and R.P.M.'s between 800 and 1000.

### **The Post-Trip Inspection:**

- Every school bus must be checked for sleeping or hiding students before the bus driver leaves the vicinity of the school bus. The child check reminder system must be used properly. (This may be an electronic system, sign, or flag at the rear of the school bus.)
- Turn on clearance lights and headlights, four-way flashers, red student stop lights, and strobe light. Walk around the school bus checking light operation, school bus body for damage, and visual inspection of the tires. Check that the student warning lights are working properly. (Student warning lights will not operate with service door open.)
- The school bus must be swept after every use. Do not sweep garbage onto the ground on school campuses.
- The ignition key is to be locked in the lock box in the rear of the school bus.

**Note:** It is the bus driver's responsibility to check for sleeping or hiding children and to operate/perform the child check reminder system.

### **30 Day School Bus Inspection:**

School bus drivers must bring their assigned bus to the Transportation garage for their scheduled thirty (30) day inspection immediately after the morning route. If the wait time for the inspection exceeds three (3) hours, a spare bus will be provided. If a bus driver chooses to wait for their assigned bus longer than three (3) hours, a vehicle will be provided (if available) for a forty five (45) minute meal break.

#### **School Bus must be:**

- Washed (exterior)
- Swept clean (interior)
- All glass (interior) wiped clean, and free of smudges.
- Ceiling and front and rear walls are to be wiped clean.
- Dashboard is to be wiped clean.
- Driver's compartment free of loose objects (including under driver's seat)
- Seatbelts untangled and laid over the seat back. *Note: If seat belts are jammed down into the seat, report it on the defect form.*

### **Inspection Paperwork:**

- Current pre-trip inspection form must be completely filled out.
- Defect report must be completely filled out and have all needed repairs marked. If there are no repairs/defects found, draw a line through the operators boxes.

### **Student and Bus Records:**

Student and bus records will be inspected by the Transportation Director or his/her designee. Wait time for the bus will be used to correct and update student records, bus records, and maps.

- Current map displaying route and bus stops.
- Written route directions.
- Student information.
- Updated student ridership for the F.E.F.P. surveys.

**Note:** Technicians will report inspection deficiencies to the Director of Transportation or his/her designee.

### **Turning the school bus in at the end of the school year:**

- Fuel tank must be full.
- Diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) tank must be full, if equipped.
- All personal items must be removed.
- Remove personal key chains.
- All student items must be removed.
- Monthly report must be completely filled out.
- Pre-trip inspection form must be completely filled out.
- Fill out a defect form and note all needed repairs (Form is required regardless if there are needed repairs).
- Washed (exterior)
- Swept clean (interior)
- All glass (interior) wiped clean and free of smudges.
- Ceiling and front and rear walls are to be wiped clean.
- Dashboard is to be wiped clean.
- Driver's compartment free of loose objects
- Seats wiped clean.
- Seatbelts untangled and laid over the seat back. *Note: If seat belts are jammed down into the seat, report it on the defect form.*
- All name and assigned seating tags must be removed (including adhesive residue).
- All signage that is not standard bus equipment must be removed.

**Note:** A clean bus reduces mildew.

**Unplanned Time Off:**

If you need to call out from work, please contact the Transportation Director or his/her designee with as much notice as possible so the bus route will be covered. This must be done by a phone call. Email and text message is not acceptable. Follow the steps for the Skyward system to report your sick leave to the Finance department.

**Random Drug and Alcohol Testing:**

School bus drivers are placed in a random selection pool for drug and alcohol testing as required by the Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) and the Department of Education (D.O.E.). Bus drivers will be notified they must report for random drug and alcohol testing on the two-way radio as follows; “You must report to Transportation (or drug testing site) immediately after your route”. If the driver is not on the school bus or cannot be reached by two-way radio, they will be notified by phone call. Bus drivers that are notified must report immediately, or if notified during their bus route will report immediately after the route. Bus drivers selected for random drug or alcohol testing may not leave the drug testing site until they have completed testing.

If a bus driver has scheduled an appointment (such as doctor or personal appointment) during their down time or between routes, they can notify the drug free program manager before the start of that business day. The nature of the appointment does not need to be reported. Otherwise, they will be committed to reporting for drug testing and will have to miss their appointment. D.O.T. regulations (49 CFR Part 40) states that refusal to test is to be treated as a positive result and the employee must be removed from a safety-sensitive function immediately.

If a bus driver cannot provide a specimen within three (3) hours, the process will end and the driver will be removed from their safety sensitive position. The bus driver will be required to see a physician (accepted by the school board) and submit a report explaining why they could not provide a specimen.

**Note:** The School Board of Levy County is a drug free work place and a positive result or refusal to test could lead to termination.

### **Bus Stop Placement Suggestions:**

- No closer than 2/10 of a mile from one another.
- More than 200 feet from railroad tracks.
- More than 200 feet from controlled intersections.
- More than 100 feet from uncontrolled intersections.
- To allow for 400 to 500 feet visibility in either direction.
- Away from blind curves or near the crest of a hill.
- To provide adequate time for a motorist to bring his/her vehicle to a safe stop.
- To allow the student waiting area to be the recommended minimum five feet from the roadway.
- In locations which permit students to walk at least ten feet in front of the bus before crossing.
- The bus stop will be a right side pick up only, if traffic moving in the opposite direction is not required to stop.
- Consider the density of traffic and number of lanes to determine if a right side pickup is warranted.
- If a turning lane is near the bus stop, place the pick up before the turning lane or after the intersection.
- In lighted locations when possible.
- Bus stops will be checked against the FDLE (Florida Department of Law Enforcement) sexual predator list by the Transportation office.

**Note:** All changes to bus stops must be approved by the Transportation department.



## **Student Pickup Procedures:**

1. Activate student warning lights (Amber) at least 200 feet before stopping.
2. Stop a safe distance (12 feet) from the students outside the bus.
3. When stopped, activate the student stop lights (Red), stop arms, and student crossing arm.
4. Engage the parking brake and place transmission in the neutral position.
5. Look for pedestrians, traffic, and other hazards before, during, and after coming to a stop.
6. Make eye contact and **count students.**
7. Check mirrors and look for moving traffic and hazards.
8. When safe, signal the students to board the bus.  
Signal students who must cross the road by pointing to them (two fingers extended, thumb down), pointing back to yourself (chest), and then pointing where you want them to go. Avoid a sweeping motion, this may confuse motorists. In case of danger, use your horn to alert students to clear the roadway.
9. When all the students are on the bus, close the service door and **count students.**
10. Once students are seated, deactivate the student stop lights, put transmission in gear, disengage parking brake, and check traffic.
11. Continue when it is safe to do so.

**Note:** If you pass or miss a student stop, do not back up. Find a safe turn around.

### **Student Drop Off Procedures:**

1. Activate student warning lights (Amber) at least 200 feet before stopping.
2. Stop at the bus stop.
3. When stopped, activate the student stop lights (Red), stop arms, and student crossing arm.
4. Engage the parking brake and place transmission in the neutral position.
5. Look for pedestrians, traffic, and other hazards before, during, and after coming to a stop.
6. **Count students** as they prepare to exit bus.
7. Check mirrors and look for moving traffic and hazards.
8. When safe, signal the students to exit the bus.
  - Signal students who must cross the road by pointing to them (two fingers extended, thumb down), pointing back to yourself (chest), and then pointing where you want them to go. Avoid a sweeping motion, this may confuse motorists. In case of danger, use your horn to alert students to clear the roadway.
9. When all the students exited the bus, close the service door and **count students**.
10. Once students have safely moved away from traffic and roadway, deactivate student stop lights, put transmission in gear, disengage the parking brake, and check traffic.
11. Continue when it is safe to do so.

### **Pre-K Passport Program:**

In an effort to ensure that Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten bus riders arrive home safely in the afternoon, the following procedures will be enforced.

- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students will wear a yellow information tag that has been prepared and maintained by the student's school.
- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students will sit at the front of the bus.
- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students will wear their yellow information tag until they have reached their bus stop/destination.
- Parents/Guardians must receive their Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students at the bus door.
- Bus drivers will verify that Parents/Guardians and waivers are approved to receive the student by checking that their identification matches an approved name on the yellow information tag.
- Bus drivers will report verification issues to dispatch.
- Bus drivers will return the student to their school if they cannot verify an approved Parent/Guardian.
- Yellow information tags will be returned to the school the next morning.

**Note:** it is acceptable to release Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students to a known, approved Parent/Guardian without checking that identification matches the yellow information tag, but the parent must always be prepared to show their identification. A Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten student may exit the bus with an older sibling if the bus driver has a waiver, signed by the school Principal. The sibling's name should also be on the yellow information tag. The Pre-K Passport Program will be reviewed annually.

**Notes for Changes to Student Stops:**

- Notes must be approved by the school.
- An official notice from the school will be accepted in place of the actual note.
- If you do not understand the note, do not leave the school until it is clarified.
- Known students may ride to school without a note; it will be required for the afternoon ride home.

**First Grade Students:**

First grade students must have a Parent/Guardian to receive them at bus stops during the first month of school.

**Unusual Bus Stop Circumstances:**

If a Parent/Guardian is usually at the bus stop and has not shown up, have Transportation call and confirm it is okay to drop the student off. Do not drop students off if danger exists (Example; unknown vehicle or person, people waiting to fight, fire, or severe weather).

**Note:** Students are only permitted to leave the bus at their assigned stops, except upon written authorization of the school principal or other district designee.

### **Railroad Crossing Procedures:**

1. **Position bus in right lane and deactivate master switch.**
2. Activate 4-way flashers at least 150 feet before the RR crossing.
3. Stop no closer than 15 feet and no more than 50 feet from the nearest rail.
4. Engage parking brake and put transmission in neutral.
5. Shut off noisy equipment and silence students.
6. **Observe-** Make sure there is room to clear the tracks after you cross them.
7. **Look-** Open the service door and the driver's window and look both ways.
8. **Listen-** Listen for trains or warning devices.
9. Close service door.
10. Put transmission in gear and disengage parking brake.
11. Look both ways, listen and cross over the tracks.
12. Do not hesitate once you commit to cross.
13. Turn off 4-way flashers when the bus has cleared the tracks.

**Note:** School buses must stop at railroad crossings regardless if they are loaded or empty.

## **Loading and Unloading Procedures for Wheelchairs:**

A.M. and P.M. - Bus attendants and teachers will help on the ramp at school.

### **A.M. - Loading on the route**

1. Bus operator exits the bus, disengages the service door power and manually closes door behind them. Opens and secures lift door, and lowers lift.
2. Student is loaded on the lift, wheel locks are applied. (Power chairs are turned off).
3. Bus operator places their hand on the chair and raises lift.
4. Bus attendant pulls the chair into the bus and secures it.
5. Bus operator stows lift and closes and secures the door, engages the service door power.
6. Bus operator assists the bus attendant to complete securement of the wheelchair if necessary.

**NOTE:** Above is best practice.

### **P.M. - Unloading on the route**

1. Bus operator exits the bus, disengages the service door power and manually closes door behind them. Opens lift door, deploys lift.
2. Bus attendant unhooks wheelchair and pushes student onto the ramp.
3. Bus operator locks wheels, places their hand on the chair and lowers lift.
4. Bus operator assists the student off the lift.
5. Bus operator stows the lift, closes and secures the door, engages the service door power.

**NOTE:** Above is best practice.

## **School Bus Evacuation Drills:**

### **Evacuation drill**

- Evacuation drills must be performed during the first six (6) weeks of each semester.
- Bus drivers should discuss the bus evacuation with all students.
- Bus drivers are required to have the proper forms.
- School administration will choose the date, time, evacuation drill area, and the bus exits to be used.
- The bus evacuation should be completed within two (2) minutes or less.

### **Evacuation Drill Steps**

1. Proceed to the evacuation drill area and remain in the bus.
2. Set the parking brake and put the bus in neutral.
3. Students must leave all school supplies and personal items on the bus.
4. School administration will start the drill.
5. Students will remain quiet.
6. Two (2) student helpers will exit the service (front) door and position themselves on each side of the door.
7. Two (2) student helpers will exit the emergency (rear) door and position themselves on each side of the door.
8. Students sitting by the emergency window exits will open them.
9. The bus driver will direct the remaining students to exit the bus, alternating seat rows from their right to their left until the bus is empty.
10. Direct the students approximately one hundred (100) feet from the school bus to a safe area.
11. The bus driver will hang the two-way radio microphone out of the driver's window; retrieve the fire extinguisher and the first aid kit.
12. The bus driver will check the school bus for any remaining students.
13. The bus driver will exit the school bus with the fire extinguisher and first aid kit and join the students with the student helpers.

**Note:** When exiting the emergency (rear) door, make sure the “hold open” mechanism has latched. Sit down and scoot off the bus floor onto the ground. Make sure the ground is level with no obstructions.

## **Paperwork:**

### **Monthly Bus Report:**

- Route mileage
- Field/activity trip mileage
- Fuel/diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), if equipped usage
- Oil usage

**Note:** Only the data for one school bus per monthly bus report. *These reports are filed by bus number. Please fill out a monthly bus report completely for every bus you use.*

### **FEFP Report:**

The FEFP (Florida Education Finance Program) surveys are scheduled in October and February. The school district relies on their bus drivers to collect accurate data. These surveys directly affect funding.

Report the students who ride every time during the survey week. (Eleven day survey window)

Use the symbols indicated for reporting the following data:

<b><u>Type</u></b>	<b><u>Symbol</u></b>
Pre-K	PK
Headstart	HS

**Note:** The FEFP survey form must be filled out on school property, not in traffic. Best practice is to take roll before unloading in the morning and to take roll when students are loading in the afternoon.

**Bus Route Verification Form:** Report is due in August. Run the entire route and report starting and ending times. **Note:** Route may be checked by real time GPS system.

**Student Stop Sheet:** Report is due in August. Report all students, last and first names, stop address, student's grade level, check the "Over 2" box if student's bus stop is more than two (2) miles from their school site, main contact phone number, main contact name, and bus stop pick up time.

**Note:** All paperwork must be complete and legible.



## **Paperwork:**

**Annual Railroad Crossing Survey:** Survey is typically due in March. Report the number of times the school bus crosses the railroad crossings on the map for one (1) full day (both a.m. and p.m. routes).

**Annual Illegal Bus Passing Survey:** Survey is typically due in March. Report all the vehicles that illegally pass the school bus for one full day (both a.m. and p.m. routes).

## **Incident Forms:**

Bus drivers must turn in an accident form (the “pink” sheet) for any bus damage, accident, crash, or traffic citation in a school bus.

Bus drivers must turn in a notification form (the “yellow” sheet) for any cited traffic violation in their personal vehicle.

Bus drivers must turn in a situation form (the “white” sheet) for anything that needs to be documented that does not fit the description of the incident or notification forms.

Bus drivers must turn in a student accident / injury report form (the “green” sheet) for any student injury witnessed or reported to them.

Bus drivers must turn in a workers’ compensation notice of injury worksheet if they are injured on the job.

**Note:** All forms are included in the annual bus driver packet and the Transportation office. School transportation is a data driven industry. Correct and proper paperwork is essential for the success of the school transportation program. All paperwork must be turned in on time. *Late paperwork can effect funding.*

### **Florida School Bus Seat Belt Law:**

Florida law requires new school buses purchased on and after January 1, 2001 to be equipped with seat belts or other federally-approved restraint system, and **requires each school bus passenger to wear a properly adjusted belt when the bus is operating.** It exempts (1) the state; (2) counties; (3) school districts; and (4) school bus operators and their agents, including teachers and volunteer chaperones, from liability (1) for personal injury to a school bus passenger caused solely because the passenger was not wearing a seat belt, or (2) for an injury to a passenger caused solely by another passenger's use or non-use of a seat belt in a dangerous or unsafe manner. It requires school districts to ensure that elementary schools receive first priority when they allocate school buses with seat belts, and exempts certain vehicles not used exclusively to transport public school students (Fla. Stat. Ann. § 316.6145 and § 1006.25 (1) (b)).

### **Car Seats:**

The Florida guideline recommends that pre-school age students (a pre-school age child is a child that is less than kindergarten age and weighs 50 pounds or less.) shall sit in a FMVSS (Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards) approved child restraint system.

- Infants up to twenty two (22) pounds will sit in a “Rear Facing Infant Only” seat.
- Pre-Kindergarten students up to forty (40) pounds will sit in a “Forward facing only” seat.
- All students forty (40) pounds and above will wear a seat belt.
- Do not install car seats where they will block an emergency exit.
- Bus drivers will inspect car seats for proper securement daily.

### **Student Safety:**

- Students should never stand at the front of the bus when it is in motion.
- Students should never sit in the operator’s seat or operate the service door.
- Students should be sitting before the bus moves.

**Requesting Police Assistance:** If a bus driver requests assistance from police or calls 911, they are not to leave the scene until help arrives.

# School Board of Levy County

## Safe Driver Plan

Revised: (August 29, 2018)

### Introduction

School bus drivers are required to participate in the Districts safe driver plan as defined by Rule 6A-3.0160141, FAC. All employees that operate a school board owned/leased vehicle will participate in this plan to monitor safety, reduce damage, and the potential for lawsuits. The plan assures we do not hire or allow any person to transport students who does not have an acceptable driving record.

### Plan

In order to qualify and remain employed by the School Board of Levy County, school bus drivers and employees that transport students must establish and maintain an overall driving record which exemplifies careful driving habits and meets the criteria prescribed by this plan. All employees that operate a School Board owned/leased vehicle must meet the criteria prescribed by this plan for operation of school board owned/leased vehicles. The Coordinator of transportation or Designee is responsible for monitoring all driving records, and all required employees will report the following to their Supervisor.

1. All accidents and violations in which they are involved as the driver of the School Board owned/leased vehicle.
2. Bus drivers and employees that transport students will report all accidents and violations in which they are cited or charged as the driver of vehicles not owned by the School Board.
3. All evidence of damage to assigned vehicle.
4. Suspension or revocation of driver license. No driver shall be allowed to drive a vehicle belonging to the School Board without proper license or when such a license is under suspension or revocation.

Failure to report as required above, or making a false or misleading report, may be grounds for termination of employment.

Drivers shall not be assigned points until court action is taken. The effective date of the points assigned shall be the first meeting following the date of the conviction.

This plan super cedes all preceding plans and is effective immediately upon ratification by employees in the bargaining unit and School Board of Levy County.

This plan will be applicable to all current bus drivers, prospective bus drivers, and all employees that operate a district owned/leased vehicle. No employee will be terminated based on his/her driving record prior to the original effective date of this plan. Prospective employees (drivers) will not be hired if, according to this plan, they have:

- More than five (5) points in the last year.
- Ten (10) points in the last three (3) years.
- Convicted of a DWI, DUI, or DUBAL in the last seven (7) years.

If an employee is terminated due to excessive points, he/she may be considered for employment in a non-driving position.

### Point System

The driving record of all School bus drivers and employees that transport students will be reviewed at least twice annually. Points shall be assessed by the committee as convictions occur according to the following schedules regardless of whether the DHSMV shows conviction, 0 points assigned, or adjudication withheld. A driver involved in a single accident or event and convicted for more than one violation will receive no less than the maximum points assigned to the highest violation category.

Point System A - will be used for bus drivers and employees that transport students.

Point System B - will be used for all employees that operate a School Board owned/leased vehicle.

DUI – Driving Under the Influence

DWI – Driving While Impaired

DUBAL – Driving with Unlawful Blood Alcohol Level

DHSMV - Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

Distracted Driving - Answering or making phone calls, instant messages, text messages, e-mail, electronic communications, and GPS (including the use of Bluetooth devices).

## Point System A

### Bus Drivers and Employees that Transport Students

Violation	Points Assessed
1. DUI, DWI, or DUBAL (Drugs or Alcohol)	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
2. Distracted driving. (Confirmed by school bus camera)	Eleven (11) points for the first offense. Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
3. Reckless driving resulting in an accident with a citation issued.	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
4. Reckless driving not resulting in an accident with a citation issued.	Four (4) points.
5. Fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer.	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
6. Leaving the scene of an accident where there was an injury and/or property damage exceeding \$500.00	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
7. Leaving the scene of an accident where there were no injury or property damage \$500.00 or less.	Three (3) points.
8. Railroad crossing violation (crossing tracks without stopping) while driving a school bus.	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
9. Passing a school bus while it is loading or unloading.	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
10. Operating a school bus without a valid driver's license (revoked, suspended, etc.).	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.

## Point System A

(Continued)

### Bus Drivers and Employees that Transport Students

Violation	Points Assessed
11. Speeding from one (1) to Fifteen (15) MPH over the posted speed limit.	Three (3) points.
12. Speeding in excess of fifteen (15) MPH over the posted speed limit.	Four (4) points.
13. Careless driving.	Three (3) points.
14. Failure to observe any traffic control device (i.e., stop sign, traffic lights, etc.).	Two (2) points.
15. Failure to observe any other established driving laws.	Zero (0) to five (5) points.
16. Improper railroad crossing procedures, Student stop procedures, backing procedures, or driving maneuvers considered to be high risk.	Zero (0) to ten (10) points.
17. Any accident indicating evidence of driver negligence, results in injuries, or demonstrates unsafe driving practices may be charged in this category.	Zero (0) to ten (10) points. (A simple majority of committee members must agree on the number of points assessed.)

## Point System B

Employees that operate a School Board owned/leased vehicle.

Violation	Points Assessed
18. DUI, DWI, or DUBAL (Drugs or alcohol)	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
19. Reckless driving resulting in an accident with a citation issued.	Six (6) points.
20. Reckless driving not resulting in an accident with a citation issued.	Two (2) points.
21. Fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer.	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for termination.
22. Leaving the scene of an accident where there was an injury and/or property damage exceeding \$500.00	Six (6) points.
23. Leaving the scene of an accident where there were no injury or property damage \$500.00 or less.	One (1) point.
24. Passing a school bus while it is loading or unloading.	Twelve (12) points or the number of points required for loss of driving privilege.
25. Operating a district owned/leased Without a valid driver's license (revoked, suspended, etc.).	Six (6) points.

## Point System B

(Continued)

Employees that operate a School Board owned/leased vehicle.

Violation	Points Assessed
26. Speeding from one (1) to Fifteen (15) MPH over the posted speed limit.	One (1) point.
27. Speeding in excess of fifteen (15) MPH over the posted speed limit.	Two (2) points.
28. Careless driving.	One (1) point.
29. Failure to observe any traffic control device (i.e., stop sign, traffic lights, etc.).	One (1) point.
30. Failure to observe any other established driving laws.	Zero (0) to three (3) points.
31. Any accident indicating evidence of driver negligence, results in injuries, or demonstrates unsafe driving practices may be charged in this category.	Zero (0) to eight (8) points. (A simple majority of committee members must agree on the number of points assessed.)



# Actions resulting from assessment of Safe Driver Plan points Point System A

Bus Drivers and Employees that Transport Students

Points / Time	Penalty
One (1) to five (5) points in one (1) year.	Documented warning, including a Written reprimand.
Eight (8) points in one (1) year.	Three (3) day suspension without pay.
Twelve (12) points in one (1) year.	Termination. Career re-direction is a district option.
Sixteen (16) points in two (2) years.	Termination. Career re-direction is a district option.
Twenty (20) points in three (3) years.	Termination. Career re-direction is a district option.

If there are no infractions for which a bus driver and employees that transport students in a four (4) year period, all prior points will be removed from his/her record.

# Actions resulting from assessment of Safe Driver Plan points Point System B

Employees that operate a School Board owned/leased vehicle.

Points / Time	Penalty
One (1) to five (5) points in one (1) year.	Documented warning, including a Written reprimand.
Eight (8) points in one (1) year.	Three (3) day suspension without pay.
Twelve (12) points in one (1) year.	Ineligible to drive a School Board owned/leased vehicle. Career re-direction is a district option.
Sixteen (16) points in two (2) years.	Ineligible to drive a School Board owned/leased vehicle. Career re-direction is a district option.
Twenty (20) points in three (3) years.	Ineligible to drive a School Board owned/leased vehicle. Career re-direction is a district option.

If there are no infractions for which employees that operate a School Board owned/leased vehicle in a three (3) year period, all prior points will be removed from his/her record.

## ADMINISTRATION

This plan will be administered by the Safe Driver Plan Committee. The committee will be organized and trained to perform the following duties:

1. To determine if an incident was preventable in accordance with the definition found in the National Safe Driver Award Rules and Guidelines. A preventable accident is “any occurrence involving an employer owned or leased vehicle which results in property damage regardless of who was injured, what property was damaged, to what extent, or where it occurred, in which the driver in question failed to do everything reasonable to prevent it.”
2. To make recommendations to the Transportation Coordinator concerning positive corrective action to be taken.
3. Review any convictions for driving violations.
4. Assess points in accordance with the attached schedule to this plan.

This plan will be administered by the Safe Driver Plan Committee, selected annually, consisting of the individuals in the following positions:

- Representative from the Human Resources Department
- Director of transportation or Designee
- Coordinator of Transportation
- Three (3) drivers from the Transportation Department (one (1) driver to be selected by the Coordinator of Transportation and two (2) drivers to be selected by the Union)

The Coordinator of Transportation or designee shall establish a schedule for review of driver's records and shall provide to the chairperson a record of convictions in accordance with this plan. An employee has the right to appeal assessment of points/or administrative action relating thereto by requesting a hearing before the Safe Driver Plan Committee. The appeal shall be by letter to the Chairperson within ten (10) working days of receipt of notice of committee action and will state the employee's objection in detail. The Chairperson shall forward the appeal letter to the members of the Safe Driver Plan Committee for action. The employee shall have the right to appear in person before the committee. The employee appeals the recommendation of the Safe Driver Committee, no points will be assigned or disciplinary action taken during the appeal process. Each employee shall be given a copy this plan and have all his/her questions answered. Each employee shall sign a form indicating that he/she had been given a copy of and read this plan.

This plan will be reviewed annually.

## SAFE DRIVER PLAN

Each employee shall be given a copy this plan and have all his/her questions answered. Each employee shall sign a form indicating that he/she had been given a copy of and read this plan.

This plan will be reviewed annually.

Print your full name:\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Safe Driver Plan established by the School Board of Levy County in regard to accidents, driving violations, and district regulations.

I have read the Safe Driver Plan, it has been explained to me, and I do understand the contents of the text of the plan.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

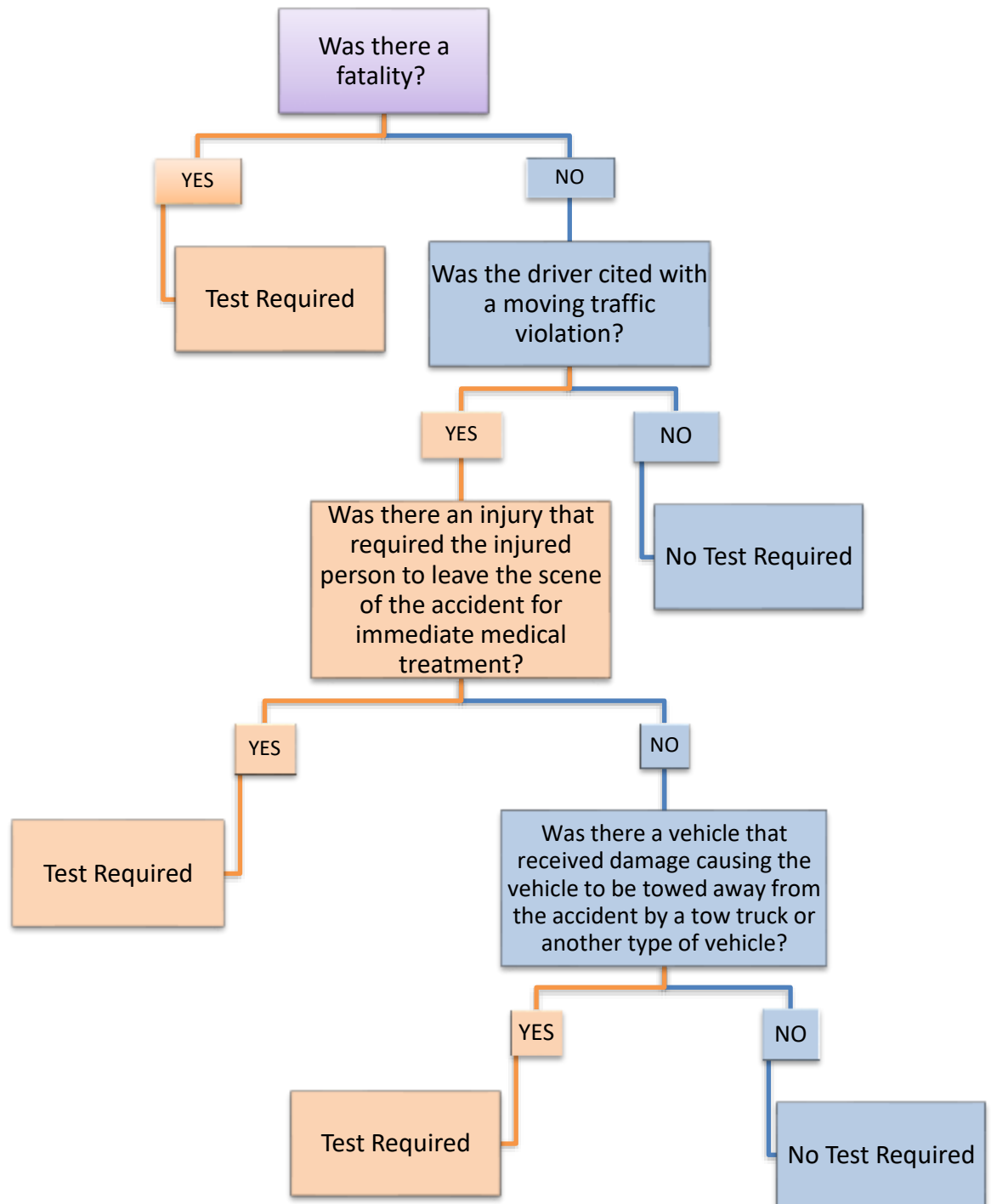
Employee Signature

## ACCIDENT / CRASH

1. Stop and investigate
  2. Set warning devices (see diagram in the crash pack)
  3. Help the injured
  4. Do not move your vehicle until Police arrive
  5. Contact Transportation as soon as possible
  6. Discuss what happened **ONLY** with proper authorities
  7. Obtain names and addresses of witnesses if possible
  8. Note the year, make, and model of other vehicles involved
  9. Comply with any required drug and alcohol testing
  10. Turn in all required paperwork
- 

- REMAIN CALM
- DO NOT ADMINISTER FIRST AID BEYOND YOUR TRAINING
- CALL 911 FOR ANY INJURIES BEYOND TYPICAL FIRST AID
- DO NOT LEAVE THE SCENE UNTIL RELEASED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT
- STUDENTS ARE NOT TO BE RELEASED UNTIL EVALUATED BY MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND A DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR GIVES APPROVAL
- NEVER ADMIT FAULT
- DO NOT MAKE STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA

## Post-Accident Drug Testing Tree



### **Field and Activity Trip Assignment Procedure:**

- Drivers interested in driving extracurricular/field trips must turn in a completed extracurricular form by the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) day of the new school year.
- Route time (pay hours) missed for trips is deducted.
- Drivers will be offered trips by seniority.
- If a bus driver cannot run their assigned trip, return it to the Transportation office and notify the Transportation Director or his/her designee.
- The returned trip will be offered to the next driver on the seniority list.
- The field trip form must be signed by the school principal or Director of Transportation.
- Field trip forms must be turned in during the same pay period.
- Trip miles must be reported on the monthly report for the school bus used.

### **Field and Activity Trip Procedures:**

- School bus drivers should perform a pre-trip inspection before picking up the trip group.
- Discuss the route that will be taken with the group leader before departure. The group should be prepared to pay any tolls.
- School bus drivers must receive a roster with names of all passengers, including coaches, teachers, and chaperones.
- School bus drivers are required to give emergency evacuation instructions to the trip group. Explain how to safely evacuate the school bus from all emergency exits. This is a good time to explain to the group that you must have silence when crossing railroad tracks.
- If the bus will need fuel to complete the trip, best practice is to refuel when the group is at their activity. School buses cannot be fueled with passengers on board. Note: A district fuel card can be checked out at the finance department. You should plan to check out a fuel card for long trips. This is a much better practice than using cash and waiting for a refund.
- The bus driver and group leader should share their cell phone numbers in case they become separated.
- If the bus experiences a mechanical failure, pull over in a safe area and call the Transportation Coordinator or his/her designee for help.
- Bus drivers should plan some down time during the waiting/non-chaperon portion of the trip and are expected to be rested and prepared for a safe return trip.
- Bus drivers may use the school bus to drive to facilities (bathroom and food) if they are not available.
- School buses that leave together stay together.
- When the trip has finished, check the bus for sleeping or hiding students and it must be swept and fueled.

**Note:** Bus drivers may pay their own admission for field/activity trips if not complementary.



### ***5.38 - Bullying and Harassment***

#### ***POLICY:***

##### **1. Statement Prohibiting Bullying and Harassment**

a. It is the policy of the School Board of Levy County that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The District will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

b. The District upholds that bullying or harassment of any student or school employee is prohibited

1. During any education program or activity conducted by a public K- 12 educational institution;

2. During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;

3. On a school bus of a public K-12 educational institution;

4. Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of a public K- 12 education institution within the scope of the School District, meaning regardless of ownership, any computer, computer system, computer network that is physically located on school property or at a school-related or school sponsored program or activity; or

5. Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School District or a school, if the bullying substantially interferes with or limits the victim's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school. School staff is not required to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

### **5.38 - Bullying and Harassment**

#### **2. Definitions**

a. Accused is defined as any District employee, consultant, contractor, agent, visitor, volunteer, student, or other person in the school or outside the school at school-sponsored events, on school buses, and at training facilities or training programs sponsored by the District who is reported to have committed an act of bullying, whether formally or informally, verbally or in writing, of bullying.

b. Bullying includes cyber-bullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to

1. Teasing;
2. Social Exclusion;
3. Threat;
4. Intimidation;
5. Stalking;
6. Cyber-stalking
7. Physical violence;
8. Theft;
9. Sexual, religious, anti-semitic, or racial harassment;
10. Public humiliation; or
11. Destruction of property.

The term *bullying* shall include Cyber-bullying whether or not specifically stated.

### **5.38 - Bullying and Harassment**

c. Complainant is defined as any District employee, consultant, contractor, agent, visitor, volunteer, student, or other person who formally or informally makes a report of bullying, orally or in writing.

d. Cyber-bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo electronic system, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identify of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

e. Cyber-stalking as defined in s. 784.048(1)(d), F.S., means to engage in course of conduct to communicate, or cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

f. Harassment means any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
3. Has the effect of substantially negatively impacting a student's or employee's emotional or mental well-being; or
4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

### **5.38 - Bullying and Harassment**

g. Bullying and harassment also encompass

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.

2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by

a. Incitement or coercion;

b. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the District school system;

c. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

3. Behavior Standards

a. The Levy County School District expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

b. The District believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for District and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment.

### **5.38 - Bullying and Harassment**

#### **4. Consequences**

##### **a. Committing an act of bullying or harassment**

1. Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action.
2. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.
3. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment, shall be determined in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate.
4. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment, shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

##### **b. Wrongful and intentional accusation of an act of bullying or harassment**

- (1) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment, range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.
- (2) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment, shall be determined in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements.

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(3) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

#### **5. Reporting an Act of Bullying or Harassment**

- a. At each school, the principal or the principal's designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy.
- b. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal's designee.
- c. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in person to the principal or principal's designee.
- d. The principal of each school in the District shall establish and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians, how a report of bullying or harassment may be filed either in person or anonymously and how this report will be acted upon.
- e. The victim of bullying or harassment, anyone who witnessed the bullying or harassment, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying or harassment has taken place may file a report of bullying or harassment.
- f. A school employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian or other person who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in the District policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident.
- g. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments.
- h. Any written or oral reporting of an act of bullying or harassment shall be considered an official means of reporting such act(s).

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i. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

#### **6. Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment**

a. The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and shall begin with a report of such an act. Incidents that require a reasonable investigation when reported to appropriate school authorities shall include alleged incidents of bullying or harassment allegedly committed against a child while the child is en route to school aboard a school bus or at school bus stop.

b. The principal or designee shall select an individual(s), employed by the school and trained in investigative procedures, to initiate the investigation. The person may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.

c. Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses shall be conducted privately, separately, and shall be confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.

d. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including but not limited to

1. Description of incident(s) including nature of the behavior;
2. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred;
3. How often the conduct occurred;
4. Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
5. The relationship between the parties involved;
6. The characteristics of parties involved, *i.e.*, grade, age;
7. The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying or harassing behavior;
8. Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;

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9. Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment;
  10. Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident; and
  11. The date, time, and method in which the parents/legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.
- e. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy shall require a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and shall include
    1. Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior; and
    2. A written final report to the principal.
  - f. The maximum of ten (10) school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps.
  - g. The highest level of confidentiality possible will be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and/or harassment and the investigative procedures that follow.
7. Investigation to Determine Whether a Reported Act of Bullying or Harassment is Within the Scope of the District.
- a. The principal or designee will assign an individual(s) who is trained in investigative procedures to initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of the School District.
  - b. The trained investigator(s) will provide a report on results of investigation with recommendations for the principal to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the District.
    1. If it is within the scope of the District, a thorough investigation shall be conducted.
    2. If it is outside the scope of the District and determined a criminal act, the principal shall refer the incident(s) to appropriate law enforcement.



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3. If it is outside the scope of the District and determined not a criminal act, the principal or designee shall inform the parents/legal guardians of all students involved.

c. Computers without web-filtering software or computers with webfiltering software that is disabled shall be used when complaints of cyberbullying are investigated.

#### **8. Notification to Parents/Guardians of Incidents of Bullying or Harassment**

a. Immediate notification to the parents/legal guardians of a victim of bullying or harassment.

1. The principal, or designee, shall promptly report via telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

2. If the bullying or harassment incident results in the perpetrator being charged with a crime, the principal, or designee, shall by telephone or in writing by first class mail, inform the parents/legal guardian of the victim(s) involved in the bullying or harassment incident about the Unsafe School Choice Option (No Child Left Behind, Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532) that states “. . . a student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary school or secondary school that the student attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school.”

b. Immediate notification to the parents/legal guardians of the perpetrator of an act bullying or harassment.

The principal, or designee, shall promptly report via telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

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c. Notification to local agencies where criminal charges may be pursued.

Once the investigation has been completed and it has been determined that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, all appropriate local law enforcement agencies will be notified by telephone and/or in writing.

#### **9. Referral of Victims and Perpetrators of Bullying or Harassment for Counseling**

When bullying or harassment is suspected or when a bullying or harassment incident is reported, counseling services shall be made available to the victim(s), perpetrator(s), and parents/guardians.

a. The teacher or parent/legal guardian may request informal consultation with school staff, (specialty staff, *e.g.*, school counselor, school psychologist), to determine the severity of concern and appropriate steps to address the concern. The teacher may request that the involved student's parents or legal guardian are included.

b. School personnel or the parent/legal guardian may refer a student to the school intervention team or equivalent school-based team with a problem solving focus for consideration of appropriate services. Parent or legal guardian involvement shall be required when the student is referred to the intervention team.

c. If a formal discipline report or formal complaint is made, the principal or designee must refer the student(s) to the school intervention team for determination of counseling support and interventions. Parent or legal guardian involvement shall be required.

d. A school-based component to address intervention and assistance shall be utilized by the intervention team. The intervention team may recommend

1. Counseling and support to address the needs of the victims of bullying or harassment;

2. Research-based counseling or interventions to address the behavior of the students who bully and harass others, *e.g.*, empathy training, anger management; and/or

3. Research-based counseling or interventions which include assistance and support provided to parents/legal guardians, if deemed necessary or appropriate.

### **5.38 - Bullying and Harassment**

#### **10. Reporting Incidents of Bullying and Harassment**

a. Incidents of bullying or harassment shall be reported in the school's report of data concerning school safety and discipline data required under s. 1006.09(6), F.S. The report shall include each incident of bullying or harassment and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals.

Cyber-bullying incidents shall be included within the bullying incidents category. The report shall also include, in a separate section each reported incident of bullying or harassment that did not meet the criteria of a prohibited act under this section with recommendations regarding such incidents.

b. The District will utilize Florida's School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data, which includes bullying or harassment as an incident code as well as bullying-related as a related element code.

#### **1. SESIR Definitions**

a. Bullying – Systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation.

b. Harassment – Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct that 1) places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, 2) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or 3) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school including any course of conduct directed at a specific person the causes substantial emotional distress in such person and serves no legitimate purpose.

2. Bullying and/or harassment incidents shall be reported in SESIR with the bullying (BUL) or harassment (HAR) code.

Unsubstantiated incidents of bullying or harassment shall be coded UBL or UHR.

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3. If the bullying or harassment results in any of the following SESIR incidents, the incident will be coded appropriately using the relevant incident code and the bullying-related code. Such incidents are:

- a. Alcohol
- b. Arson
- c. Battery
- d. Breaking and Entering
- e. Disruption on Campus
- f. Drug Sale/Distribution Excluding Alcohol
- g. Drug Sale/Possession Excluding Alcohol
- h. Fighting
- i. Homicide
- j. Kidnapping
- k. Larceny/Theft
- l. Robbery
- m. Sexual Battery
- n. Sexual Harassment
- o. Sexual Offenses
- p. Threat/Intimidation
- q. Trespassing
- r. Vandalism
- s. Weapons Possession
- t. Other Major (Other major incidents that do not fit within the other definitions)

### **5.38 - Bullying and Harassment**

4. Discipline and referral data shall be recorded in Student Discipline/Referral Action Report and Automated Student Information System.

5. The District shall provide bullying incident, discipline, and referral data to the Florida Department of Education in the format requested, through Survey 5 from Education Information and Accountability Services, and at designated dates provided by the Department

6. Data reporting on bullying, harassment, unsubstantiated bullying, unsubstantiated harassment, sexual harassment, and threat/intimidation incidents as well as any bullying-related incidents that have as a basis of sex, race, or disability shall include the incident basis. Victims of these offenses shall also have the incident basis (sex, race, or disability) noted in their student records.

#### **11. Instruction on Identifying, Preventing, and Responding to Bullying or Harassment**

a. The District shall ensure that schools sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. It is committed to maintain a social climate and social norms in all schools that prohibit bullying and harassment. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment – teachers; administrators; counselors; school nurses; other nonteaching staff such as bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers; school librarians; parents/legal guardians; and students.

b. Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and school volunteers shall be given instruction at a minimum on an annual basis on the District's policy and regulations against bullying and harassment. The instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment as well as how to effectively identify and respond to bullying in schools.

c. The District shall establish a list of programs that provide instruction to students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff and school volunteers on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying and harassment including instruction or recognizing behaviors that lead to bullying and harassment and taking appropriate preventive action based on those observations.

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The list of authorized programs shall be available at each school, District offices, and on the District website.

#### **12. Reporting to a Victim's Parents/Legal Guardians the Legal Actions Taken to Protect the Victim**

The principal or designee shall by telephone and/or in writing report the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. According to the level of infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified by telephone and/or writing of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

#### **13. Publicizing the Policy**

a. At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall, in writing, inform school staff, parents/legal guardians, or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student of the District's student safety and violence prevention policy.

b. Each District school shall provide notice to students and staff of this policy through appropriate references in the *Code of Student Conduct* and employee handbooks and through other reasonable means.

c. The Superintendent shall also make all contractors contracting with the District aware of this policy.

d. Each school principal shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on bullying and harassment with students in a student assembly or other reasonable format.

e. Reminders of the policy and bullying prevention messages such as posters and signs will be displayed around each school and on the District school buses.

#### **14. Review of Policy**

The Superintendent and appropriate staff shall review this policy at a minimum every three (3) years. The review shall include input from parents, law enforcement, and other community members.

### ***5.38 - Bullying and Harassment***

The Superintendent shall present the policy and any recommended changes to the School board for consideration.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED: 1001.43, 1003.04, 1003.31, 1003.32, 1006.07, 1006.08, 1006.09, 1006.10, 1006.147, F.S., 20 USC

1232g

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE(S) 6a-10.081

HISTORY:

ADOPTED: 2/17/09

REVISION DATE(S): 2/17/09, 04/08/14, 07/14/15, 08/25/15, 7/26/2016, 7/25/17, 12/10/19\_

## NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The **Florida Educational Equity Act**, Chapter 228.2001 Florida Statutes, requires that public education agencies regularly notify staff, students, and applicants for employment, parents, collective bargaining units, and the general public of its policies of non-discrimination. The information below is posted to comply with the notification requirements of the act.

**Equity Coordinator** – Marla Hiers, Director of Personnel is designated as the Equity Coordinator for Levy County. She can be reached at 480 Marshburn Drive, Bronson, FL 32621, 352-486-5231 or email [marla.hiers@levyk12.org](mailto:marla.hiers@levyk12.org)

**Non-discrimination in Employment** - All applicants for employment with the School Board of Levy County shall be recruited, selected, and assigned solely on the basis of experience, qualifications and the necessary requirements for the vacant position. Race, religion, age, national background, marital status, and gender will not be considered factors in the recruitment, selection, and assignment of such personnel, nor shall any qualified disabled person be excluded from consideration for employment solely on the basis of his/her disability. Reasonable accommodations are available for persons with disabilities to complete the application and/or interview process. Applicants/individuals with disabilities requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act may contact the District office, 480 Marshburn Drive, or call 352-486-5231 for assistance.

**Non-discrimination in Student Activities** - No student enrolled in the Levy County Schools shall, on the basis of race, religion, age, national background, gender, marital status, disability, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in or be subjected to discrimination under any curricular or any other school sponsored activity. Career and Technical Education Programs are included in the curricular programs offered without discrimination. Programs are, Agritechnology, Agriculture, Education Directed Study, Game/simulation /Animation Programing, Carpentry, Cooperative Diversified Education, Administrative Office Specialist, Animal Science & Service, AG Biotechnology, Accounting Applications, Digital Design, Medical Skills & Services, Allied Health Assisting, Emergency Medical, Nursing Assistant, Environmental Horticulture Science & Services and Hospitality & Tourism Management. All classes are open for enrollment with the exception of the Health Academy. There is an application process for the Health Academy due to area clinical requirements & availability. Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation. The district may assess each student's ability to benefit from specific programs through placement tests and counseling, and if necessary, will provide services or referrals to better prepare students for successful participation. Opportunities for using school facilities will be afforded to all youth groups without discrimination. This includes the Boy Scouts of America or any other youth group as provided in the Boy Scouts Act. This rule shall apply to all present and future course offerings and to all other school sponsored activities in which students are eligible to participate.



## NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

**Grievance Procedures for Employees Excluded from Bargaining Units\*\*** - Whenever an employee feels that he/she has a grievance, including allegations of discrimination, every effort shall be made to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problem on an informal basis. When this cannot be done, resort shall be to the more formal procedures provided herein in an effort to resolve a grievance. The grievance procedures for employees excluded from bargaining units shall be as follows:

Any employee with a grievance shall advise his/her immediate supervisor or the Director of Personnel of said grievance in writing and a copy of the said grievance shall be sent to the Superintendent. The written statement of the said grievance must be delivered within sixty (60) days of the alleged violation.

**The School Board of Levy County** *does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, religion, marital status or genetic information in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. The district also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other patriotic youth groups, as required by the Boys Scout of America Equal Access Act. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to:*

**Marla Hiers, Director of Personnel, 480 Marshburn Drive, Bronson, FL 32621,  
352-486-5231 or email [marla.hiers@levyk12.org](mailto:marla.hiers@levyk12.org)**

## Bus Driver Handbook Acknowledgement Form

The Bus Driver's handbook describes important information about the requirements, expectations, and safe operations of a Levy District School Bus Driver. I understand that I should consult with my immediate supervisor regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

Since the information, policies, laws, and state rules described here are subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that the revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies, laws, and state rules. Only the School Board of Levy County Superintendent or designee has the ability to adopt any revisions to this handbook.

I acknowledge that I have received this handbook and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with all policies, laws, and state rules contained within.

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Employee's Signature

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Date

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Employee's Name