8630 BUS DRIVER/BUS AIDE RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Education requires all school bus drivers and bus aides employed by the district or employed by a contracted school bus company to be reliable persons of good moral character who possess the qualifications necessary to perform the duties of the position. Anyone driving a school bus used to transport students to and from school and school related activities must meet all requirements of N.J.S.A. N.J.A.C. 6A, and all New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (NJMVC) rules governing school bus drivers. All school bus drivers must possess the appropriate license and endorsement(s) to drive a school bus in the State of New Jersey and are subject to all the Federal and State requirements to maintain the appropriate license.

"Employer" for the purposes of this Policy and Regulation means a Board of Education or a contractor that provides student transportation services under contract with the Board of Education. In the event the school district employs school bus drivers and bus aides and/or uses a contractor for transportation services, the "employer" for school district employed school bus drivers and bus aides shall be the Board of Education and the "employer" for contracted school bus drivers and bus aides shall be the contractor that provides student transportation under contract with the Board of Education.

School bus drivers and bus aides shall meet criminal history background check requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1(c) and tuberculin testing requirements pursuant to applicable State statutes and administrative codes. School bus drivers and bus aides shall be considered under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to be school officials who have a legitimate educational interest to parts of a student's record relating to transportation, without parental consent, as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:27-12.1(j)1.

In addition to the medical examination required of every holder of a special license issued for the transporting of children to and from schools pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:3-10.1 et seq., any school bus driver who is seventy years of age or older shall annually furnish, to the employer for review by the NJMVC at the NJMVC's biannual inspection, satisfactory evidence of continuing physical fitness in the form of a medical examination by a licensed medical doctor or licensed osteopathic physician. In addition, any school bus driver who is seventy-five years of age or older shall every six months furnish, to the employer for review by the NJMVC at the NJMVC's biannual inspection, satisfactory evidence of continuing physical fitness in the form of a medical examination by a licensed medical doctor or licensed osteopathic physician. In addition, any person applying for a special license and any person who is the holder of a special license for the transporting of children to and from schools, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq., shall comply with the provisions of Section 2 of N.J.S.A. 39:3-10.1a and Section 6 of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-19.1. The Chief Administrator of the NJMVC may suspend or revoke a license pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:3-10.1.

All drivers of buses or other vehicles used by the Board for the transportation of students to and from school shall, in addition to any exam required by law, submit to a medical exam for the presence of alcohol, narcotics, or habit-producing drugs within the scope of the "New Jersey Controlled Dangerous Substances Act," (N.J.S.A. 24:21-1 et seq.).

All drivers of buses or other vehicles used by the Board for the transportation of students to and from school shall, in addition to any exam required by law, submit to a medical exam that includes hearing and visual acuity tests that are in accordance with the provisions of the "Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999," 49 U.S.C. § 113.

A Commissioner of Education-developed training program on proper procedures for interacting with students with special needs shall be administered by the employer to all school bus drivers and bus aides in accordance with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-19.2. This training program must be administered in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-19.3.a. and all school bus drivers and bus aides must file a certification with their employer that the individual has completed the training program within five business days of its completion. The employer shall retain a copy of the certificate for the duration of the individual's employment and shall file a copy of the certification to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-19.3.b.

School bus drivers and bus aides shall receive training in the use of a student's educational records and in their responsibility to ensure the privacy of the student and his or her records N.J.A.C. 6A:27-12.1(j) 2. In addition, permanent and substitute school bus drivers and bus aides shall be trained for the functions of their positions and in a safety education program as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.1 et seq.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-28, school bus drivers must visually inspect the school bus they are assigned at the end of the transportation route to determine that no student has been left on the bus.

The school bus driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times and shall be responsible for maintaining order. The school bus driver will never exclude a student from the school bus, but if unable to manage a student, the school bus driver will report the unmanageable student to the Principal or designee of the school in which the student attends.

The Principal or designee, upon such report from the school bus driver, may assign appropriate discipline. The discipline may include excluding the student from the bus. The student's parent shall provide for the student's transportation to and from school during the time of exclusion.

Upon notification from the NJDOE that a school bus driver employed by the Board has had his or her bus driver's license suspended or revoked, the Board, within one business day of the notification, shall provide a statement to the NJDOE verifying that the school bus driver no longer operates a school bus for the Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-19.6.

In the event of an emergency, school bus drivers shall follow procedures established by this Board. School administrators shall organize and conduct emergency exit drills at least twice within the school year for all students who are transported to and from school. All other students shall receive school bus evacuation instruction at least once per year. School bus drivers and bus aides shall participate in the emergency exit drills, which shall be conducted on school property and shall be supervised by the Principal or person assigned to act in a supervisory capacity. Drills shall be documented in the minutes of the Board of Education at the first meeting following completion of the emergency exit drill in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.2(d).

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-19.4, a Commissioner-developed student information card shall be completed by a parent of a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), who receives transportation services, when the IEP is developed or amended. Upon receiving consent from the parent, the student information card shall be provided to a school bus driver and bus aide for each student on the bus route to which the school bus driver or bus aide is assigned for whom a student information card has been completed by the parent.

The school bus driver will immediately inform the Principal of the receiving school and the School Business Administrator or designee of the district providing the transportation following an accident that involves injury, death, or property damage. The school bus driver must also complete and file within ten days of the accident the Preliminary School Bus Accident Report prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. In addition to the Preliminary School Bus Accident Report, the driver of a school bus involved in an accident resulting in injury or death of any person, or damage to property of any one person in excess of $500, shall complete and file within ten days after such accident a motor vehicle accident report in accordance with N.J.S.A. 39:4-130.

School bus drivers are prohibited from using a cellular telephone or other electronic communication device while operating a school bus unless the school bus is parked in a safe area off a highway or in an emergency situation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:3B-25. A school bus driver who violates this Policy provision is subject to fines pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:3B-25.

School bus drivers are responsible for the safety of their students and shall rigorously observe all motor vehicle laws and regulations and State Board of Education rules in the operation of their school bus pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:3B-27.

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et seq.; 18A:25-2; 18A:39-17; 18A:39-18;
18A:39-19.1; 18A:39-19.2; 18A:39-19.3; 18A:39-19.4;
18A:39-19.6; 18A:39-28
N.J.S.A. 39:3-10.1 et seq.
N.J.S.A. 39:3B-25; 39:3B-27
N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.1 et seq.; 6A:27-12.1 et seq.
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