Update Guidesheets

December 2018 Update Guidesheet

Note: Descriptions below identify revisions made to CSBA's sample board policies, administrative regulations, board bylaws, and/or exhibits. Editorial changes have also been made. Districts and county offices of education should review the sample materials and modify their own policies accordingly.

Transportation Safety and Emergencies

(AR revised) Regulation updated to reflect NEW LAW (AB 1798) which requires that all school buses be equipped with passenger restraint systems by July 1, 2035. Regulation also reflects NEW LAW (AB 1840) which delays until March 1, 2019 the requirement that each school bus and student activity bus be equipped with a child safety alert system, and allows for a possible six-month extension for districts with an average daily attendance of 4,000 or less under specified conditions. Regulation adds the conditions under which a student activity bus is exempt from the requirement to install a child safety alert system.
See AR 3543

CSBA Sample
Administrative Regulation
Transportation Safety And Emergencies

AR 3543
Business and Noninstructional Operations

Cautionary Notice: Government Code 17581.5 relieves districts from the obligation to perform specified mandated activities when the Budget Act does not provide reimbursement during that fiscal year. The Budget Act of 2018 (SB 840, Ch. 29, Statutes of 2018) extends the suspension of these requirements through the 2018-19 fiscal year. As a result, certain provisions of the following administrative regulation related to transportation safety plans and safety instruction for students may be suspended.

Note: The following regulation is for use by districts that provide school bus transportation using their own school bus drivers. Districts that contract out for all transportation services may revise this regulation as appropriate to ensure that the contracting firm meets all legal requirements regarding transportation safety.

Each day, prior to driving a school bus, each school bus driver shall inspect the bus to ensure that it is in safe operating condition and equipped as required by law and that all equipment is in good working order. At the completion of each day's work, the driver shall prepare and sign a written report of the condition of the equipment specified in 13 CCR 1215. The report shall indicate any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver which would affect safe operation or result in mechanical breakdown of the bus. If no defect or deficiency is discovered or reported, the driver shall so indicate on the report. Any defect or deficiency that would affect safe operation shall be repaired prior to operating the bus. (13 CCR 1215)

(cf. 3540 - Transportation)
(cf. 3541.1 - Transportation for School-Related Trips)
(cf. 3542 - School Bus Drivers)

Passenger Restraint Systems

Note: Pursuant to Vehicle Code 27316 and 27316.5, any school bus or student activity bus purchased or leased for use in California must be equipped with a passenger restraint system if the bus was manufactured on or after the dates specified in law, as described below. As amended by AB 1798 (Ch. 206, Statutes of 2018), Vehicle Code 27316 requires that all school buses in use in California must be equipped with a passenger restraint system on or before July 1, 2035.

***Note: Toward this end, districts may retrofit older school buses with passenger restraint systems. In determining whether to retrofit buses, the California Department of Education's (CDE) "Passenger Restraints Frequently Asked Questions" recommends that districts consider the age of the bus, the total cost of the retrofit, and the required reinspection of the bus by the California

Highway Patrol.***

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any school bus or student activity bus which is purchased or leased by the district is equipped with a combination pelvic and upper torso passenger restraint system at all designated seating positions if that bus: (Vehicle Code 27316, 27316.5; 13 CCR 1201)

1. Is a Type 1 school bus designed for carrying more than 16 passengers and the driver, and was manufactured on or after July 1, 2005

2. Is a Type 2 school bus or student activity bus designed for carrying 16 or fewer passengers and the driver, or for carrying 20 or fewer passengers and the driver if the bus has a manufacturer's vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, and was manufactured on or after July 1, 2004

Note: The following optional paragraph reflects legislative intent of Vehicle Code 27316.

The Superintendent or designee shall prioritize the allocation of school buses purchased, leased, or contracted to ensure that elementary students receive first priority for new school buses equipped with passenger restraint systems whenever feasible.

When a school bus or student activity bus is equipped with a passenger restraint system, all passengers shall use the passenger restraint system. (5 CCR 14105)

Note: Pursuant to Vehicle Code 27316, no person, district, or organization may be held criminally liable if a passenger improperly uses or fails to use the passenger restraint system. However, the CDE's "Passenger Restraints Frequently Asked Questions" encourages districts to develop procedures to enforce disciplinary actions for nonuse or improper use of the passenger restraint system.

Note: The following optional paragraph may be expanded to specify the steps that should be taken by the driver to reasonably ensure that all passengers are properly restrained (e.g., verbal instructions to students, visual inspection), which may vary depending on the age/grade levels of the students. Such steps may also be incorporated in district regulations adopted pursuant to 5 CCR 14103 related to student conduct on buses, bus driver authority, and the suspension of riding privileges; see BP/AR 5131.1 - Bus Conduct.

Bus drivers shall be instructed regarding procedures to enforce the proper use of the passenger restraint system. Students who fail to follow instructions of the bus driver may be subject to discipline, including suspension of riding privileges, in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

(cf. 5131.1 - Bus Conduct)
(cf. 5144 - Discipline)

Fire Extinguishers

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher, located in the driver's compartment, which meets the standards specified in law. In addition, a wheelchair school bus shall have another fire extinguisher placed at the wheelchair loading door or emergency exit. All fire extinguishers shall be regularly inspected and serviced in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal. (Education Code 39838; 13 CCR 1242; 19 CCR 574-575.3)

Child Safety Alert System

Note: Pursuant to Vehicle Code 28160, as amended by AB 1840 (Ch. 426, Statutes of 2018), on or before March 1, 2019, each school bus, student activity bus, youth bus, and child care motor vehicle (i.e., vehicle designed, used, or maintained for more than eight persons, including the driver, that is used by a child care provider to transport children) must be equipped with a "child safety alert system" (i.e., a device located at the interior rear of a vehicle that requires the driver to either manually contact or scan the device before exiting the vehicle). Districts with an average daily attendance of 4,000 or less that cannot meet this requirement by that date may submit specified documentation to the California Highway Patrol, on or before March 1, 2019, which demonstrates that they have ordered or purchased the child safety alert system(s) and made arrangements for the installation. Upon providing this documentation, such districts will have until September 1, 2019 to meet the requirement.

Note: Student activity buses may be exempt from this requirement if certain procedures are followed, as specified in Vehicle Code 28160.

In accordance with Vehicle Code 28160, each school bus or student activity bus shall be equipped with an operational child safety alert system at the interior rear of the bus that requires the driver to either manually contact or scan the device, thereby prompting the driver to inspect the entirety of the interior of the vehicle before exiting.

A student activity bus that does not have a child safety alert system may be used only if all of the following apply: (Vehicle Code 28160)

1. The student activity bus is not used exclusively to transport students.

2. When the student activity bus is used to transport students, the students are accompanied by at least one adult chaperone selected by a school official. If an adult chaperone is not a school employee, the chaperone shall meet the requirements for a school volunteer.

(cf. 1240 - Volunteer Assistance)

3. One adult chaperone has a list of every student and adult chaperone, including a school employee, who is on the student activity bus at the time of departure.

4. The driver has reviewed all safety and emergency procedures before the initial departure, and the driver and adult chaperone have signed a form, with the time and date, acknowledging that the safety plan and procedures were reviewed.

5. Immediately before departure from any location, the adult chaperone shall account for each student on the list of students, verify the number of students to the driver, and sign a form indicating that all students are present or accounted for.

6. After students have exited a student activity bus, and before driving away, the driver shall check all areas of the bus, including, but not limited to, overhead compartments and bathrooms, to ensure that the bus is vacant.

7. The driver shall sign a form with the time and date verifying that all required procedures have been followed.

8. The information required to be recorded pursuant to items #4, 5, and 7 may be recorded on a single form and shall be retained by the district for a minimum of two years.

Electronic Communications Devices

Note: Vehicle Code 23125 prohibits a person from driving a school bus while using a wireless telephone except for work-related or emergency purposes. Vehicle Code 23123.5 prohibits the driver of a motor vehicle (including a school bus or school activity bus pursuant to Vehicle Code 415 and 545) from using an electronic wireless communications device for any purpose, including, but not limited to, text-based communication, but provides an exception for voice-operated and hands-free operation or for a function that requires only a single swipe or tap of the driver's finger as long as the device is mounted on the windshield, dashboard, or center console of the vehicle. The following paragraph limits the use of any electronic communications device to work-related or emergency purposes. The district should consult legal counsel if it is considering allowing broader use of such devices.

A bus driver is prohibited from driving a school bus or student activity bus while using a wireless telephone or other electronic wireless communications device except for work-related or emergency purposes, including, but not limited to, contacting a law enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency service agency or entity. In any such permitted situation, the driver shall only use a wireless telephone or device that is specifically designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation or a function that requires only a single swipe or tap of the driver's finger provided the device is mounted on the windshield, dashboard, or center console of the bus. (Vehicle Code 23123.5, 23125)

Safe Bus Operations

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 39834, any Governing Board member, employee, or other person who knowingly operates or permits operation of a school bus in excess of its seating capacity is guilty of a misdemeanor. However, the Board is authorized to adopt policy that allows seating capacities to be exceeded in cases of emergency; see BP/AR 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan.

School buses and student activity buses shall not be operated whenever the number of passengers exceeds bus seating capacity, except when necessary in emergency situations which require that

individuals be transported immediately to ensure their safety. (Education Code 39834)

(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

Note: Vehicle Code 34501.6 mandates any district that provides student transportation to adopt procedures that limit bus operation when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility, as described below, and that give drivers for school activity trips discretionary authority to discontinue operation when it is unsafe.

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to 200 feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for school activity trips may discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility. (Vehicle Code 34501.6)

Unauthorized Entry

The Superintendent or designee may place a notice at bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The driver or another school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a bus without prior authorization. (Education Code 39842; 13 CCR 1256.5)

(cf. 3515.2 - Disruptions)

Transportation Safety Plan for Boarding and Exiting Buses

Note: The district should modify items #1-2 below to reflect grade levels offered by the district. A district that does not maintain any of grades prekindergarten through 8 should delete items #1-2.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a transportation safety plan containing procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of students. The plan shall address all of the following: (Education Code 39831.3)

1. Determination of whether students in grades prekindergarten through 8 require an escort to cross a private road or highway at a bus stop pursuant to Vehicle Code 22112

2. Procedures for all students in grades prekindergarten through 8 to follow as they board and exit the bus at their bus stops

3. Boarding and exiting a school bus at a school or other trip destination

Note: Education Code 39831.3 requires that the transportation plan include procedures to ensure that a student is not left unattended on a school bus or student activity bus. It is recommended that the plan reflect the requirement of Vehicle Code 28160 to install a child safety alert system on each bus. See the section "Child Safety Alert System" above.

4. Procedures to ensure that a student is not left unattended on a school bus, student activity

bus, or, if applicable, youth bus

5. Procedures and standards for designating an adult chaperone, other than the driver, to accompany students on a school activity bus

A copy of the plan shall be kept at each school site and made available upon request to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). (Education Code 39831.3)

Parental Notifications

Note: The following section is for use by districts that offer any of grades prekindergarten through 6 and should be revised to reflect the grade levels offered by the district.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide written safety information to the parents/guardians of all students in grades prekindergarten through 6 who have not previously been transported in a district school bus or student activity bus. This information shall be provided upon registration and shall contain: (Education Code 39831.5)

1. A list of school bus stops near each student's home

2. General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones

3. Red light crossing instructions

4. A description of the school bus danger zone

5. Instructions for safely walking to and from school bus stops

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Student Instruction

Students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety as follows: (Education Code 39831.5; 5 CCR 14102)

1. Each year, all students who receive home-to-school transportation in a school bus shall be provided appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills.

Note: Item #2 below is for use by districts that offer any of grades prekindergarten through 8 and should be revised to reflect the grade levels offered by the district.

2. At least once each school year, all students in grades prekindergarten through 8 who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to:

a. Proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver

b. How to safely cross the street, highway, or private road

c. In school buses with passenger restraint systems, instruction in the use of such systems as specified in 5 CCR 14105, including, but not limited to, the proper fastening and release of the passenger restraint system, acceptable placement of passenger restraint systems on students, times at which the passenger restraint systems should be fastened and released, and acceptable placement of the passenger restraint systems when not in use

d. Proper passenger conduct

e. Bus evacuation procedures

f. Location of emergency equipment

As part of this instruction, students shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Each time the above instruction is given, the following information shall be documented:

a. District name

b. School name and location

c. Date of instruction

d. Names of supervising adults

e. Number of students participating

f. Grade levels of students

g. Subjects covered in instruction

h. Amount of time taken for instruction

i. Bus driver's name

j. Bus number

k. Additional remarks

This documentation shall be kept on file at the district office or the school for one year and shall be available for inspection by the CHP.

(cf. 3580 - District Records)

Note: Item #3 below applies to all students in grades prekindergarten through 12.

3. Before departing on a school activity trip, all students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to, the location of emergency exits and the location and use of emergency equipment. This instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Bus Accidents

In the event of a school bus accident, the driver shall immediately notify the CHP and the Superintendent or designee. The driver shall not leave the immediate vicinity of the bus to seek aid unless necessary. (13 CCR 1219)

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a report of each accident that occurred on public or private property involving a school bus with students aboard. The report shall contain pertinent details of the accident and shall be retained for 12 months from the date of the accident. If the accident was not investigated by the CHP, the Superintendent or designee shall forward a copy of the report to the local CHP within five work days of the date of the accident. (13 CCR 1234)

The Superintendent or designee shall review all investigations of bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

(cf. 4112.42/4212.42/4312.42 - Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers)

Legal Reference:
EDUCATION CODE
39830-39843 Transportation, school buses
39860 Contract for transportation; requirement that student not be left unattended
51202 Instruction in personal and public health and safety
PENAL CODE
241.3 Assault against school bus driver
243.3 Battery against school bus driver
VEHICLE CODE
415 Definition of motor vehicle
545-546 Definition of school bus and student activity bus
22112 Loading and unloading passengers
23123.5 Use of wireless telephone or communications device while driving; exceptions
23125 Use of wireless telephone prohibited while driving school bus
27316-27316.5 Passenger restraint systems
28160 Child safety alert system
34500 California Highway Patrol responsibility to regulate safe operation of school buses
34501.5 California Highway Patrol responsibility to adopt rules re: safe operation of school

buses
34501.6 School buses; reduced visibility
34508 California Highway Patrol responsibility to adopt rules re: equipment and bus operations
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5
14100-14105 School buses and student activity buses
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 13
1200-1294 Motor carrier safety
2480 Airborne toxic control measure; limitation on bus idling
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 19
574-575.3 Inspection and maintenance of fire extinguishers
CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 49
571.1-571.500 Motor vehicle standards, including school buses

Management Resources:
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS
Passenger Restraints Frequently Asked Questions
WEB SITES
American School Bus Council: http://www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org
California Association of School Business Officials: http://www.casbo.org
California Association of School Transportation Officials: http://www.castoways.org
California Department of Education, Office of School Transportation:
http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/tn
California Highway Patrol: http://www.chp.ca.gov
National Transportation Safety Board: http://www.ntsb.gov
U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov

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TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES

Transportation Safety Plan

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a transportation safety plan to address student safety which includes all of the following:

1. Procedures for determining if students in grades prekindergarten through 8 require escort to cross a private road or highway at a bus stop pursuant to Vehicle Code 22112

(cf. 3542 - School Bus Drivers)

2. Procedures for all students in grades prekindergarten through 8 to follow as they board and exit the bus at their bus stops

3. Procedures for boarding and exiting a school bus at a school or other trip destination

A copy of the plan shall be kept at each school site and made available upon request to the California Highway Patrol.

Safe Bus Operations

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to 200 feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for school activity trips shall have the authority to discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility. (Vehicle Code 34501.6)

(cf. 3516.5 - Emergency Schedules)
(cf. 3540 - Transportation)
(cf. 3541.1 - Transportation for School-Related Trips)

School buses and school student activity buses shall also not be operated whenever the number of passengers exceeds bus seating capacity, except when necessary in emergency situations which require that students be moved immediately to ensure their safety.

(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

The Superintendent or designee may place a notice at bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The driver or another school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a bus without prior authorization and has intent to commit a crime. (Education Code 39842; 13 CCR 1256.5)

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (continued)

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher located in the driver's compartment which meets the standards specified in law. (Education Code 39838)

The Superintendent or designee shall review all investigations of bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

Student Instruction

All students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. (Education Code 39831.5)

1. Each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills. Each student who receives home-to-school transportation in a school bus shall be required to receive this instruction. (5 CCR 14102)

2. At least once each school year, all students in grades prekindergarten through 8 who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to: (Education Code 39831.5)

    a. Proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver

    b. How to safely cross the street, highway or private road

    c. The use of passenger restraint systems, including but not limited to the proper fastening and release of the passenger restraint system, acceptable placement of passenger restraint systems on students, times at which the passenger restraint systems should be fastened and released, and acceptable placement of the passenger restraint systems when not in use

    d. Proper passenger conduct

(cf. 5131.1 - Bus Conduct)

    e. Bus evacuation

    f. Location of emergency equipment

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (continued)

As part of this instruction, students shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit. (Education Code 39831.5)

Each time the above instruction is given, the following information shall be documented: (Education Code 39831.5)

a. District name

b. School name and location

c. Date of instruction

d. Names of supervising adults

e. Number of students participating

f. Grade levels of students

g. Subjects covered in instruction

h. Amount of time taken for instruction

i. Bus driver's name

j. Bus number

k. Additional remarks

This documentation shall be kept on file at the district office or the school for one year and shall be available for inspection by the California Highway Patrol. (Education Code 39831.5)

3. Before departing on a school activity trip, all students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to: (Education Code 39831.5)

a. Location of emergency exits

b. Location and use of emergency equipment

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (continued)

This instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit. (Education Code 39831.5)

Notifications

The Superintendent or designee shall provide written safety information to the parents/guardians of all students in grades prekindergarten through 6 who have not previously been transported in a school bus or school activity bus. This information shall be provided upon registration and shall include: (Education Code 39831.5)

1. A list of school bus stops near each student's home

2. General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones

3. Red light crossing instructions

4. School bus danger zone

5. Walking to and from school bus stops

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE
39830-39842 Transportation, school buses, especially:
39831.5 Student instruction in bus safety; notifications
39834 Excess of seating capacity
39838 Fire extinguisher on school buses
39842 School bus; unauthorized entry
51202 Instruction in personal and public health and safety
PENAL CODE
241.3 Assault against school bus driver
243.3 Battery against school bus driver
VEHICLE CODE
27316 Passenger restraint systems
34500 California Highway Patrol responsibility to regulate safe operation of school buses
34501.6 School buses; reduced visibility
34508.5 Investigation of accidents
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5
14102 Instruction in bus safety and evacuation
14103 Authority of the driver
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 13
1256.5 Notice warning against unauthorized entry on school buses