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<p><b>Ref #: 1303.73; DCL 1240-04-01-17(3)(d)(7)</b></p>	<p><b>Policy Council Approval Date: 06/21/2022</b></p>

**COMPONENT: TRANSPORTATION**

**SUBJECT: TRIP ROUTING**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** To ensure that in planning fixed routes the safety of the children being transported is the primary consideration. The agency must also ensure that the following basic principles of trip routing are adhered to: The time a child is in transit to and from the Head Start or Early Head Start program must not exceed 45 minutes; Vehicles must not be loaded beyond the maximum passenger capacity at any time; Vehicles must not be required to back up or make “U” turns, except when necessary for reasons of safety or because of physical barriers. Stops must be located to minimize traffic disruptions and to afford the driver a good field of view in front of and behind the vehicle; When possible, stops must be located to eliminate the need for children to cross the street or highway to board or leave the vehicle; If children must cross the street before boarding or after leaving the vehicle because curbside drop off or pick up is impossible, they must be escorted across the street by the bus monitor or another adult; Specific procedures must be established for use of alternate routes in the case of hazardous conditions that could affect the safety of the children who are being transported, such as ice or water build up, natural gas line breaks, or emergency road closing. In selecting among alternatives, transportation providers must choose routes that comply as much as possible with the requirements of this section.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE:**

Bus drivers will not make a right turn on a red light.

Cell phones will not be used by the driver.

No driver of an agency vehicle will text while operating vehicle.

Drivers must use hands free device while operating vehicle.

Maximum capacity of each bus shall not be exceeded.

No child will be allowed to walk to and from the bus to pick up/drop off location without being escorted by an adult.

Routes are to be developed by bus drivers and approved by the **Safety/Nutrition Manager**.

Routes are to be established that follow federal, state and local safety regulations.

Routes are to be set up to:

- Limit each child's ride to 45 minutes
- Ensure maximum bus capacity is not exceeded throughout route
- Limit the need to back up or make U turns
- Stop at the best location at the pick-up point to provide the best view in front and behind the vehicle.
- Minimize disruption to traffic during stops.

Seating charts should be created for each route. The driver will ensure that the correct chart is posted for the route.

All routes and stops will be certified as safe by **Safety/Nutrition Manager**.

Alternate routes:

- Are used when ever environmental issues, weather related situations, or civil disturbances interfere with scheduled transportation routes.
- Situations requiring the use of alternate routes could include snow, ice, severe thunderstorms, tornados, floods, chemical spills from trucks or trains, earthquakes, fires, or hostage situations, or traffic accidents.
- The decision may be made to either dismiss early or hold children at the center past the normal dismissal time to avoid sending buses out during hazardous conditions.
- Parents would be notified of this decision and given the opportunity to pick up their children.
- If hazardous conditions occur while in route, driver must call into the center with report and decision will be made whether to continue on with route, return to the center, or attempt an alternate route.

Walking to and from the bus:

- All children must be escorted to and from the bus by an adult.
- Parent/guardian is responsible for escorting their children to and from the bus.
- Head Start assumes responsibility for children after they have entered the bus.

Emergency Backing procedures:

- Vehicles must not be required to back up or make "U" turns except when necessary for reasons of safety or because of physical barriers.
- Bus routes should be planned so as to eliminate the requirement to back the bus onto public roadways. When it is necessary to turn the bus around, parking lots and other wide areas of the roadway should be used. This may necessitate driving past the last child's house until a safe turn around can be executed.

- When it is necessary to back the bus, safe backing can be accomplished by: The monitor will go to the back of the bus, looking out the rear door window and the side windows, and giving verbal instructions to the driver about space and location of other vehicles, objects, and/or people in the area behind the bus.
- If there is no monitor/volunteer available, the driver must back extremely slowly, making maximum use of all mirrors.
- Even with the assistance of a monitor/volunteer, the driver should always check rear and side view mirrors. The driver should maintain clear verbal communication with the monitor/volunteer whether on or off the bus, before and during backing the vehicle.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

Emergencies include, but are not limited to children or staff becoming ill or being injured, traffic accidents, animal collision, bus breakdown or traffic back up due to road blockage.

If a child or staff becomes ill while on the bus the driver along with the monitor will evaluate the situation. The driver will find a safe location to pull off the road. The monitor will tend to the child to make sure the child is assured and made as comfortable as possible. The driver will make the call to the center to let them know of the situation. If there is no immediate danger (asthma attack, sever bleeding, etc.) the driver will inform the staff with whom they are speaking to let the parent know the situation and ask the parent/guardian to make arrangements to pick the child up.

If the situation is of a severe nature, the driver will call 911, inform them of the situation and request an ambulance. The driver will call the parent to let them know the situation and instruct them to go to the hospital and wait for the ambulance to deliver the child. The driver or monitor will notify the center and also the Central Office of the situation and request another driver to finish the route. The driver will accompany the child to the hospital. They will carry with them the child's emergency card. Classroom staff will notify the parents of other children on the bus, making sure not to breach confidentiality, of the situation and their child is not injured/ill but may need to be reassured because of the incident. The sub-driver and monitor will assure the other children and the bus will proceed to the center.

If the bus is in an accident, 911 will be called immediately. The bus driver will shut down the engine and turn off all lights. Passengers will be checked for injuries and attended to accordingly. The bus driver or monitor will call the center and the Central Office to apprise them of the situation. Central office staff will call another center to send their bus and monitor to the site to pick up the children. Center staff will call the parents/guardians of the children on the bus to notify them of the situation and to go to hospital, if their child was carried to the hospital, or to come to the center to wait for the children to be brought there. They will be encouraged for safety reasons, not to come to the site of the accident.

For various emergencies, the driver will pull off the road, keeping in mind the safety of the children. Look for a parking lot or drive way to pull into. If none are available pull off road as far as possible. Turn off the engine and, turn emergency flashers on, place emergency triangles out

and check for damage. If there is damage, call 911. Call the Central Office and notify them of the incident. The Central office will then call the classroom to notify them of the incident and the situation whether or not the child's parent/guardian needs to be notified.

If the bus breaks down, get off the road as far as possible, preferably a driveway or parking lot, turn on emergency flashers if possible, and put the reflective triangles out. Call the Central office and also notify your center. Central office staff will call the nearest center to see if their bus is available to pick up any children who may be on the bus. Classroom staff will notify parents of situation. If it is in the afternoon when children are being returned to their pick up points parents may be asked to pick their child up at a specified location. If it is a morning route, the first available bus will be asked to pick the children up.

In any emergency, stay calm, use due caution to keep the children, as well as yourself safe, and notify 911, the center, and Central Office.

### **NO CELL PHONE SERVICE PROCEDURE**

If you are in an area the cell phone does not have service and there is an emergency, the monitor is to go to the closest residence and request they call 911, the center, or Central Office to let them know the situation. Return to the bus to help supervise the children. If there are no houses in the area, flag down a passing motorist and request they call 911, the center, or Central Office depending on the situation. If the bus is operational and an emergency requires a child be carried to the hospital, drive to the closest residence and call 911. Call the center and the Central Office to notify them of the emergency.

In any emergency, stay calm, use due caution to keep the children as well as yourself safe, and notify 911, the center and Central Office.

## PARENT BUS RULES

1. Head Start children will be returned to the place from where they were picked up. If there is to be a change in pick-up or drop-off location, notice must be given in **WRITING** at least five days in advance.
2. Parents should notify the Head Start center when their child will be absent.
3. Parents should notify Head Start a week in advance of moving.
4. Children should be dressed and ready when the bus arrives. The driver will not go to the door. If your child misses the bus, it will be the parents' responsibility to take the child to the Head Start center.
5. **When a child is picked up or delivered home, the parent or designated person MUST sign the child on and off the bus.**
6. If no one is at home or at the stop, the child will be returned to the center, and the parent will be responsible for coming to the center and getting the child. The child will not be transported again until the parent confers with the Head Start **Safety/Nutrition Manager**.
7. If a child has to cross the street to get on or off the bus, they must be accompanied by an adult. The child must cross in front of the bus.
8. Only Head Start children and monitor will ride the bus to and from the Head Start Center.
9. There is **NO EATING, DRINKING, OR SMOKING** on the bus.
10. Toys should not be sent with the child.
11. We will ensure two adults to be on the bus at all times to meet Federal Performance Standards and Daycare Licensing Mandate.
12. All bus passengers will wear seatbelts, and appropriate height and weight restraints. The only exception is when the monitor is assisting a child.
13. Parents who transport their child to the Head Start center must accompany their child into the building and sign them in. Children must not arrive at the center more than 15 minutes before class begins.
14. The bus driver may determine if a child is ill at the time they board the bus. A sick child will not be transported.
15. Bus transportation is a privilege. If a child is disruptive or putting others at risk, a child can lose their bus privilege.
16. Parents should be prepared to give the bus driver 15 minutes lead way either at pick-up or drop-off each day.
17. These are the offenses if your child is not at the bus point and/or bus rules are not followed throughout the year.

**The First Offense:** If the child is not at the pick-up point after three attempts the bus will not return to that destination until the parent has contacted the **Safety/Nutrition Manager**.

**The Second Offense:** Bus services will be suspended for three days and parents must contact the **Safety/Nutrition Manager** to have the services reinstated.

**The Third Offense:** Bus services will be terminated for the remainder of the program year. No Exceptions!

IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE RIDING THE BUS, PLEASE CALL BY 6:30 A.M.