

TIPTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION



Transportation Handbook 2026-2027

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Tipton Community School Corporation Transportation Handbook is to provide clear expectations and procedures for employees who transport or supervise students on school buses and school-sponsored trips. The first responsibility of every transportation employee is the safe, orderly, and reliable transportation of students.

This handbook applies to regular route drivers, substitute drivers, special needs drivers, bus aides, coaches or employees driving school vehicles, and any employee assigned transportation responsibilities. It should be used with applicable Indiana law, TCSC Board policy, the student Ride Guide, the employee handbook, and any written directions from the Transportation Office or Corporation Office.

If this handbook conflicts with law, Board policy, a collective bargaining agreement, or a directive from the Superintendent or designee, the higher authority controls. Questions should be directed to the Transportation Office before action is taken.

Section I: Transportation Department Operations and Communication

A. Chain of Command

Drivers and aides should direct questions or concerns to the level that can best address the issue. Concerns should not be handled through public criticism of schools, school personnel, fellow employees, parents, or students.

Concern or Topic	Primary Contact
Bus mechanics, maintenance, mechanical safety concerns	Mechanics or Transportation Maintenance Department
Licensing, routing, personnel matters, route assignments, general procedures, and policy questions	Transportation Director, or Corporation Office (Base), as applicable
Student behavior, parent concerns, discipline, or school-specific matters	Building Principal or designee
Immediate safety emergency	Call 911 when necessary, then notify the Transportation Director, Base, or school as soon as practical

School bus incident reports should be submitted directly to the appropriate building administrator. Do not place student discipline reports in the Transportation Director's mailbox or in interschool mail unless directed to do so.

B. Communication Systems

ParentSquare is used by TCSC to communicate important information by phone, email, or text message. Employees are responsible for keeping their contact information current.

Transportation mailboxes should be checked daily. Important memos, notes, route information, and other notices may be placed in employee mailboxes.

The Transportation Office should be treated as a business office. Employees who wish to visit should use the breakroom area when possible.

Driver directory information is gathered or verified at the beginning of each year. Employees should notify the Corporation Office whenever their name, address, phone number, or emergency contact information changes.

C. Bus Radios

Bus radios must be kept on and turned up at all times while a bus is in operation. The radio system is an essential safety tool and must be used professionally, briefly, and only for transportation-related communication.

- Use the radio for transportation business, route communication, student safety, and emergencies. Do not use the radio for casual conversation, joking, criticism, arguments,

or personal opinions about school staff, students, parents, policies, procedures, or programs.

- Use professional language at all times. The radio system is FCC licensed and may be monitored. Radio traffic may also be heard by scanners in the community.
- Drivers should normally remain on Channel 1, the transportation channel. Channel 2 is the talk-around channel and may be used by multiple buses traveling together on trips. Drivers must return to Channel 1 after the trip.
- Use bus numbers and locations, not student names, parent names, medical details, discipline details, or other unnecessary personal information. If confidential details are needed, request a private follow-up through the Transportation Office or school office.
- Keep calls brief and to the point. Identify your bus number and the bus number, school, or location you are calling. Hold the microphone close, press and hold the button briefly before speaking, continue holding while speaking, and pause briefly before releasing the button.
- Emergency radio traffic has priority. In an emergency, clearly provide the bus number, location, nature of the emergency, whether 911 is needed, and whether students are on board or being evacuated.
- If a communication is not urgent and would require a long explanation, drivers should wait until the bus is safely stopped or the route is completed and then contact the Transportation Office or school by phone or in person.
- Drivers should contact the schools they serve directly by radio when needed. The Transportation Office should only be used to relay school communication when direct contact is not available.
- Improper radio use may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

D. Late Bus Communication

- The Transportation Director will provide schools and the administrative office with route lists as soon as possible after the start of school. The Transportation Director and schools will work together to keep lists current.
- Drivers running more than ten minutes late must notify the District Office (base) as soon as possible.
- After 7:30 a.m., drivers should also notify the schools they serve of the delay and estimated minutes late.
- In the afternoon, drivers should notify the schools they serve until 3:30 p.m. After 3:30 p.m., drivers should notify Central Office or base.
- Schools and Transportation Office personnel will provide updated information to parents who call.
- In emergency weather situations, ParentSquare may be used to notify families of transportation issues.

E. Meetings and In-Service

Transportation meetings may be scheduled during the school year to share information, review procedures, complete required training, and address concerns. Employees are expected to attend required meetings and trainings.

Bus drivers must participate in quarterly transportation meetings as part of the 181-day transportation work obligation. These meetings will be scheduled and facilitated by the Transportation Director once each quarter and will generally last one hour. One day is dedicated to completing annual yellow card requirements online, as applicable.

A driver who is unable to attend a required quarterly meeting must notify the Transportation Director in advance. The absence must be handled through available leave when appropriate or as an unpaid dock day. Repeated failure to attend required meetings, repeated dock days, or failure to follow attendance procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Section II. Personnel Requirements and Conduct

A. Licensing, Physicals, and Driver Eligibility

Each driver is responsible for maintaining all required licenses, endorsements, physical examinations, and driver certifications. Current licenses and physicals must be filed with the Transportation Office at all times. Drivers must carry a current license and physical card when driving.

Drivers must maintain eligibility under Indiana school bus driver requirements, including any required CDL endorsements, physical fitness certification, pre-service training, standard certification, annual safety meeting attendance, and other requirements established by law or the State School Bus Committee.

The Corporation may require an additional physical examination at any time in accordance with applicable law and policy.

B. Drug and Alcohol Testing

Drug and alcohol testing is conducted as required by law and policy, including random testing. Employees are expected to cooperate with testing procedures and to extend patience and courtesy to other employees and testing personnel. A driver holding a valid school bus certification is subject to drug testing.

C. Attendance and Absences

Regular and prompt attendance is essential because transportation services cannot be provided when employees are not present. Excessive absences, tardiness, or leaving early may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Drivers should make every reasonable effort to schedule personal appointments between routes or outside assigned work time.
- When an absence is necessary, the driver must contact the Transportation Director. If the Transportation Director is unavailable, the driver must contact the District Office.
- A substitute is not considered secured until the driver has spoken with the Transportation Director, the District Office, or other designated person who confirms coverage.
- If a voicemail is left, the driver must follow up to confirm that a substitute has been secured.
- On the date of the absence, the driver must communicate the reason for the absence, expected length of absence, and substitute driver if known.
- Upon return, the employee must complete required absence paperwork and submit it to the Transportation Office immediately.

D. Personal and Sick Leave

Regular route bus drivers receive three (3) personal leave days each school year. For transportation leave purposes, one day means the full amount of time the driver is normally assigned to transport students to and from school for that driver's regular route assignment.

Unused personal leave may roll over at the end of the school year, consistent with Board policy and payroll records, up to a maximum accumulation of six (6) personal leave days.

Special education bus drivers who are assigned to eight-hour workdays receive three (3) personal leave days and eight (8) sick leave days each school year. Special education bus drivers may accumulate up to six (6) personal leave days. Any unused personal leave beyond the six-day maximum will be converted to sick leave. Sick leave may accumulate up to a maximum of ninety (90) days.

Personal leave and sick leave may be taken in half-day increments when necessary. Drivers must communicate leave requests or absences to the Transportation Director as soon as practical and follow all applicable absence reporting procedures.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE: In case of death in the immediate family a classified employee is entitled to be absent from work without the loss of compensation for up to five (5) consecutive days and an additional five (5) days, if requested may be granted within sixty (60) days following interment for related reasons.

1. Immediate family is defined as: father, mother, wife, husband, child, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandparent, grand-child, step father, step mother, step brother, step sister, step-child, step-grandchild and any relative who is living with the employee as a permanent resident of that household.
2. In case of death of a brother-in-law, sister-in-law, spouse's grandparent or the employee's or spouse's uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or first cousin, the employee is entitled to two (2) days leave without loss of compensation.
3. Employees who are requested to be pallbearers will be granted a leave of one (1) day per year without loss of compensation.

E. Dress and Footwear

Drivers and aides are expected to wear clothing that is neat, clean, appropriate for the workday, and consistent with the professional example expected of school employees.

- Shoes must fully enclose the toes. Sandals, flip-flops, toeless shoes, strapless shoes, and unsafe platform shoes are not permitted while driving or assisting on a bus.
- Shorts should be appropriate for work and no more than four inches above the knee.
- Shirts must be modest and extend below the waistline of the pants. Halter tops, midriff shirts, backless shirts, spaghetti straps, tank tops, see-through apparel, and fishnet garments are not permitted.
- Clothing may not be suggestive, contain inappropriate language or innuendo, or advertise or promote tobacco, alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, or gang activity.

- Employees should arrive at work in the shoes they will wear while driving or assisting on the route.

F. Personal Cell Phones and Electronic Communication

Student safety requires the full attention of the driver. Drivers may not use, hold, view, or interact with a personal cell phone, smart watch, tablet, earbud, headphone, or other personal electronic communication device while the bus is operational or while the driver is responsible for supervising students.

For purposes of this section, a bus is operational from the time the driver begins pre-trip or prepares to move the bus for a route or trip until the bus is parked, secured, and the driver is no longer responsible for students or vehicle operation. This includes loading, unloading, idling, waiting in traffic, waiting at a railroad crossing, moving on school grounds, and driving on routes or ECA trips.

- Personal calls, texts, messaging, social media, internet use, photos, videos, personal audio, and personal navigation use are not permitted while the bus is operational.
- Drivers must use the bus radio or approved district communication procedures for route and safety communication whenever possible.
- In a true emergency when radio communication is not sufficient or available, the driver should safely stop and secure the bus, set the parking brake, keep students supervised, and use a phone only as necessary to contact 911, the Transportation Director, base, or school officials.
- No employee may take photos or videos of students or transportation incidents on a personal device unless specifically directed by administration or law enforcement in an emergency.
- Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

G. Children, Friends, Family, and Unauthorized Riders

Employees may bring their own children on the bus while on duty only when the children are school age, enrolled in TCSC, and the bus is not overloaded. Daily or recurring arrangements must be approved by the Transportation Director.

Children may not be in the bus facility or walking in the bus lot unless accompanied by the employee. Friends, relatives, and other unauthorized individuals are not allowed on the bus while the employee is on duty.

H. Student Records and Confidentiality

Information collected by drivers or aides about students is the property of the school corporation. Student lists, seating charts, behavior notes, medical information, emergency plans, and other student records must be protected and returned to the Transportation Director at the end of the school year or when employment ends.

Student information, including physical, emotional, medical, disability-related, behavioral, and transportation information, must be kept confidential. Student information may be shared only

with school officials who have a legitimate need to know the information for safety, supervision, transportation, or educational purposes. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

The school nurse, in consultation with building administration and the Transportation Director when appropriate, will determine when a student's medical condition or health plan creates a serious risk during transportation or requires specific safety information to be shared with a driver or aide. When that determination is made, the driver and aide will be provided the information necessary to safely transport the student and respond to foreseeable emergencies. The information must be secured, used only for transportation purposes, and not discussed with students, parents, other drivers, or employees who do not have a need to know.

I. Driver Misconduct and Progressive Discipline

Driver misconduct includes refusing or neglecting to follow a directive issued by authorized personnel, violating expectations in this handbook, violating written or verbal directives, or using judgment that places, or has the potential to place, students, staff, or equipment at serious risk of injury or damage.

Progressive discipline will be used when reasonably appropriate. Progressive discipline is not required for serious misconduct or conduct that creates significant safety, legal, or operational concerns.

1. Verbal warning, with notation that the warning was given.
2. Written reprimand.
3. One-day disciplinary suspension without pay.
4. Three-day disciplinary suspension without pay.
5. Five-day disciplinary suspension without pay.
6. Additional discipline, up to and including termination, when warranted by the circumstances.

Discipline will be determined by the Transportation Director or appropriate administrator based on the facts of each incident.

Section III. Routes, Students, and Daily Operations

A. Beginning of the School Year

Student lists and mileage forms will be provided when needed. Drivers must complete these forms accurately and update student lists throughout the year. Drivers should submit student list changes to the Transportation Director at least once each month or sooner if a safety or route issue requires immediate attention.

Each bus must have accurate route directions, a current seating chart, and an emergency call list available on the bus.

B. Routes and Route Changes

Route maps and turn-by-turn route directions will be made available through Traversa. Detailed route instructions must be kept on the bus, and a copy must be provided to the Transportation Director.

- Drivers may not make route changes without prior approval from the Transportation Office.
- Approved route changes must be provided in writing so they can be accurately entered into Traversa.
- Route assignments are reviewed at the end of each school year and may be adjusted before the next school year begins.
- Drivers should receive route assignments at least one week before school begins when possible, with adjustments made after student assignments are reviewed.

C. Road Conditions and Obstructions

Drivers should report unnecessary School Bus Stop or School Bus Turn Around signs, low tree limbs, road hazards, and other obstructions that affect safe operation. Road Condition Reports are available in the Transportation Office and are forwarded to the appropriate city, county, or state department. Reports should include the exact address or location and clear details. If work is not completed within five working days, notify the Transportation Office for follow-up.

D. Arrival, Dismissal, and School Grounds

Location	Morning Drop-Off	Afternoon Arrival for Pick-Up
Tipton Elementary School	No earlier than 7:40 a.m.	No later than 2:50 p.m.
Tipton Middle School	No earlier than 7:40 a.m.	No later than 2:50 p.m.
Tipton High School	No earlier than 7:40 a.m.	No later than 2:50 p.m.

Consistency helps drivers provide safe and reliable service. Drivers should never jeopardize passenger safety to meet a time. Line-up sheets are available to drivers.

- At drop-off locations, drivers are not to pull out and around other buses. Wait and follow the line out of the parking area.
- Drivers are not to back up on school grounds unless specifically directed as part of an approved safety procedure.
- During morning drop-off, drivers should remain in their buses using the neutral/park brake method until all students have unloaded. If a driver needs to speak with an administrator, the driver should pull forward out of the drop-off line.
- During afternoon pick-up, drivers should be in their buses with engines turned off until students have boarded. Buses should remain in neutral until released by radio to depart.

E. Riding a Different Bus

Students may not ride a bus other than the bus assigned in Traversa unless the change has been approved through the student's school office. In an emergency or when a student must ride a different bus because of after-school care, a parent or guardian must contact the student's school office. The school will issue a bus note or other official communication. The note must either be provided to the Transportation Director so the driver can be notified or provided directly to the driver by the student. Drivers may not accept a route change based only on a student's verbal statement or an informal parent message that has not been processed through the school office.

F. Student Behavior and Ride Guide

The student Ride Guide is available online and outlines bus behavior expectations and consequences. Drivers are expected to read and follow the Ride Guide.

- All students must be assigned seats. Seating charts assist with safety, accountability, and investigation of concerns.
- Drivers should first work with students to correct minor behavior concerns. If a concern continues or becomes serious, the driver should complete a conduct report based on first-hand knowledge or observation.
- Cameras may be used when available and needed for student and driver safety.
- Students are not permitted to eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
- Student electronic devices, including cell phones, may be used only with headphones unless otherwise directed. Inappropriate use includes taking pictures or videos, listening to audio without headphones, or any use that may distract the driver.
- Bullying, harassment, threats, or unsafe behavior must be reported to the building administrator.

Bus drivers are often the first school employees students see in the morning and the last they see in the afternoon. Drivers are expected to be positive role models, communicate professionally with students and families, and seek assistance from parents and school personnel when student behavior concerns continue.

Section IV. Bus Operation, Maintenance, and Care

A. Daily Bus Inspections

Drivers must inspect their buses before and after routes and trips. Daily trip inspections are required by state law. Inspections must be documented on the required form and turned in as directed by the Transportation Office. If any problem is detected, notify the Transportation Maintenance Department immediately.

Pre-trip checks must be completed early enough that minor repairs can be made or another bus can be assigned and inspected before departure. Failure to complete or document a proper inspection may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

B. Parking Lot and Bus Facility

- Enter and exit the gates as marked when driving a bus or personal vehicle.
- Keep speed low when entering or exiting the bus lot.
- Do not park buses in front of garage doors unless directed to do so.
- Park buses only in assigned spaces.
- Do not park buses in faculty parking areas on the east or north side of the Bus Barn.
- Personal vehicles must be parked only in marked spaces near the Transportation Facility and not in bus areas.

C. Bus Assignment and Substitute Buses

Drivers may not trade buses unless authorized by the Transportation Director or designee. When a driver uses a substitute bus, the driver is responsible for ensuring the bus has adequate fuel, is kept clean, and is inspected before use.

D. Maintenance and Service

- Drivers must monitor service mileage and notify the Transportation Director or designee approximately 500 miles before service is due.
- Drivers must report unusual noises, vibrations, leaks, mechanical concerns, or safety issues promptly.
- Maintenance and repairs must be requested through the proper work request process. Drivers may not repair, modify, attach items to, or alter a bus without authorization.
- Drivers should check fluids regularly and immediately notify the mechanic of safety concerns.
- Drivers should operate buses in a way that avoids unnecessary wear, including smooth braking, avoiding overspeeding, using the proper pre-heat method, and not operating with low oil pressure or beyond maintenance intervals.

E. Fueling

Drivers are provided fuel keys and codes for corporation buses. When fueling, no one may be on the bus. The driver must stay with the bus and monitor fueling to prevent spills. The fuel cap must be replaced after fueling. All corporation buses should maintain at least one-half tank of fuel at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

F. Reduced Idling

For health, safety, and fuel conservation reasons, buses may not idle for more than two minutes around school buildings or the Transportation Office. If a bus is stopped at a school building for more than two minutes, the bus must be shut off. Buses should not idle while waiting for students during field trips, extracurricular activities, or other off-campus events.

G. Cleaning

Drivers are responsible for keeping their assigned bus clean inside and out. A clean bus supports student safety, driver visibility, orderly student behavior, vehicle maintenance, and public confidence in the transportation program. The corporation provides cleaning supplies. A bus may be removed from service if cleanliness, safety, or inspection concerns warrant it.

- Daily: remove trash, check seats and seat belt condition, check for items left behind, and report any problem immediately.
- Weekly: sweep the floor, empty trash, clean windows and mirrors, and clean seats.
- Monthly: wash the exterior, mop the bus, verify accurate route directions, seating chart, and emergency call list are on the bus, and check that the first aid kit is filled.
- If using the bus wash, arrangements must be made with the bus mechanic and completed Monday through Friday.
- After each route or trip, the driver must complete a post-trip check to ensure all students have exited and to identify trash, damage, or items left behind.
- ECA and substitute drivers are responsible for returning the bus clean, fueled as directed, and free of trash or equipment unless otherwise directed by the Transportation Director.

Drivers must complete and submit the bus cleaning checklist monthly by the deadline established by the Transportation Director. The Transportation Director or designee may inspect buses periodically, including random inspections, monthly reviews, and follow-up inspections after a concern is reported. Deficiencies may be documented and returned to the driver for correction by a specified deadline. Repeated failure to keep a bus clean, failure to submit required documentation, or failure to correct identified concerns may result in disciplinary action.

H. Equipment and Special Items

- First aid kits must be checked regularly. Notify the Transportation Director when items need to be replaced.
- Video monitoring equipment may be used on buses for safety, discipline, and evaluation purposes. Recordings may be viewed by authorized school personnel.

- FM radio use must be monitored by the driver. Music, humor, or commentary that is inappropriate for school-age children may not be played.
- Drivers transporting preschool or car-seat students must know how to check car seats for security as part of the daily inspection. Car seats may only be used by students assigned to them.
- Drivers and aides transporting students in wheelchairs must complete annual equipment training at the beginning of each year.

Any time students are on the bus, the driver must remain in the vicinity. If the driver must leave in an emergency, the bus must be secured and the keys must remain with the driver.

Section V: Activity, ECA, and Field Trips

A. Trip Approval and Scheduling

ECA trips support extracurricular programs, athletics, academic teams, clubs, and school-sponsored activities. Athletic trips are coordinated between the Athletic Director and the Transportation Director. Other field or activity trips must be approved through the appropriate trip request process.

- Requests for buses, other than athletic trips, should be submitted through the field trip request process at least ten school days before the requested trip.
- All trips should be planned at least two weeks in advance when possible.
- Overnight trips require approval by the School Board. Requests should be submitted to the Superintendent's Office at least twenty school days before the board meeting at which approval will be requested.
- Expenses incurred on approved trips will be paid as approved by the Superintendent or designee.

As a general rule, after-school ECA trips will not be scheduled for departure before 4:30 p.m. Early departures require approval by the Superintendent or designee and should be communicated to the Transportation Director or designee in advance of the season whenever possible. Early departures should be exceptions, not the normal practice, and should generally be assigned to substitute drivers when doing so protects regular route coverage.

B. ECA Trip Request and Assignment Procedure

The purpose of the ECA trip assignment process is to provide safe student transportation, protect daily route coverage, distribute opportunities fairly, and recognize drivers who support students and schools beyond regular route assignments.

- Before each fall, winter, and spring season, the Transportation Director or designee will communicate available or anticipated ECA trips to drivers when schedules are available.
- Drivers may request trips by the sign-up process and deadline established by the Transportation Director or designee. Signing up is a request for consideration and does not guarantee assignment unless confirmed by the Transportation Director or designee.
- Drivers are encouraged to complete ECA trips when available, and the assignment process will consider the number of completed trips when assigning unfilled trips.
- When an ECA trip is not filled by a volunteer, the driver with the fewest completed ECA trips during the current school year may be assigned the trip. If multiple drivers have the fewest completed ECA trips, the Transportation Director or designee will determine the assignment based on route coverage, driver availability, prior assignments, student safety, and operational needs.
- Completed ECA trips will be tracked by the Transportation Director or designee. For this purpose, a completed ECA trip means a confirmed assignment that the driver completes, regardless of the length of the trip.
- If a driver has an immediate family member participating on the team, class, or club being transported, the driver will be given priority for a reasonable number of requested

trips for that activity when trips are available and route coverage allows. This does not guarantee every trip for that activity unless no other eligible driver requests the trip or the transportation leadership team determines the assignment is appropriate.

- When safe and operationally appropriate, preference may be given to a driver who already plans to attend the event as a spectator, especially for local or close-to-home events.
- To support substitute driver retention, the Transportation Director will annually identify a minimum number of ECA trips to be reserved or prioritized for substitute drivers. The number and process will be communicated to drivers at the beginning of the school year or season and remains subject to driver eligibility, availability, route coverage, and student safety.
- The Transportation Director or designee has final authority over ECA trip assignments, vehicle assignments, and driver assignments.

C. Driver Expectations for ECA Trips

- A sponsor must be present on every trip. Drivers may not leave the school unless a sponsor is on the bus.
- Drivers and sponsors should clarify the exact destination, route, parking arrangements, driver admission, and meal accommodations before departure when applicable.
- When more than one bus is used, buses should travel and stay together. Channel 2 may be used for bus-to-bus communication during the trip, and drivers must return to Channel 1 afterward.
- A driver who accepts or is assigned an ECA trip is expected to remain at the event location and be available for the entire event unless the Transportation Director or designee has approved the driver leaving the site. Approval to leave should be limited to relatively close-to-home events where the driver can return within 15 minutes in an emergency. The sponsor must know where the driver will be and how to contact the driver immediately.
- Drivers should inform the sponsor of the start time home. The sponsor is responsible for having students or athletes ready to board at that time.
- Seatbelt buses will be used on most ECA trips when available. Seatbelts are required to be worn by all passengers on buses equipped with seatbelts.
- Drivers must inspect the bus before students enter and immediately after use, checking for damage, trash, and items left behind.
- Drivers should sweep and empty trash at the end of the trip and report any concern to the Transportation Director or designee.

D. Sponsor and Chaperone Responsibilities

- Initiate the trip through the required approval process and within required timelines.
- Supervise students at all times. Students may not be turned loose or left unsupervised on field trips.
- Inform students that all school rules apply on the trip and on the bus.

- Assign at least one staff member to each bus to serve as supervisor. If only one staff member or chaperone is on a bus, that person should sit near the rear.
- Provide a roster to adult supervisors, chaperones, the bus driver, and the school office. The sponsor must know how many students board and must account for all students upon return.
- Review bus rules and expectations with students before departure.
- Make sure equipment and supplies are properly secured before departure.
- Report any incident occurring on the trip to the principal or athletic director within 24 hours.
- Inspect the bus after use, report damage, remove trash, and ensure the bus is cleaned. If a bus is not cleaned upon return, the sponsor and riders are responsible for cleaning it.
- Remain until all students are accounted for and have departed for home.
- Provide these expectations to adult chaperones.

E. Passenger Rules for Trips

- Go immediately to an assigned or available seat.
- Remain seated for the entire trip and wear seatbelts properly when the bus is equipped with seatbelts.
- Remain seated until the bus has completely stopped at the unloading point. Passengers will normally exit through the front door.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Talk in a reasonable tone of voice.
- Keep windows at or below the designated level and only with the driver's permission.
- Respect other people's property and personal space. Students are responsible for their own belongings.
- Cell phone use may be determined by the bus driver and sponsor.
- Follow all school rules and all directives from the driver. The driver is in charge of the bus while en route.

F. Activity Bus Driver Training and Authorization

The Transportation Director is responsible for coordinating and documenting training for employees who are approved to drive a TCSC activity bus.

Employees may not drive an activity bus for a school-sponsored trip until they have completed the required district training, demonstrated safe operation of the vehicle, and received approval from the Transportation Director. Training may include vehicle operation, pre-trip inspection expectations, loading and unloading procedures, emergency procedures, student supervision expectations, accident reporting, and any other procedures necessary for safe transportation.

Approval to drive an activity bus or school vehicle may be revoked or limited at any time based on safety concerns, failure to follow district procedures, driving record concerns, or other operational needs. The Transportation Director will maintain documentation of completed training and approved activity bus drivers.

Section VI: Emergency Procedures

A. Evacuation Drills

Bus evacuation drills will be conducted at least once each semester and within 45 school days of the beginning of each semester. Drills should be completed in two minutes or less and documented as required. Forms are available in the Evacuation Drill mailbox or as otherwise directed by the Transportation Director. The driver is responsible for signing and submitting the completed form to the Transportation Director or designee.

Students should receive appropriate instruction for evacuation procedures. When a bus is equipped with passenger safety belts, students must also receive instruction at least once each semester on proper safety belt fastening and use.

B. General Emergency Preparation

- Each school bus should carry an up-to-date passenger roster for daily routes and activity trips.
- Each bus should carry current contact information for school officials and emergency responders.
- Students, including those who ride only for activity trips, should participate in bus evacuation drills at least twice each school year.
- On activity trips, passengers should be advised of emergency exits, the first aid kit, the fire extinguisher, and emergency communication equipment.

C. Bus Accidents and Incidents

A driver must notify Base within 24 hours of any unusual incident that has resulted in, or could have resulted in, an accident. Examples include taking evasive action, leaving the roadway, striking a building or object, or any incident involving property damage.

In the event of a bus accident, the following procedures apply:

1. The driver calls or radios base and provides the nature of the situation, location, other vehicles involved, apparent damage, injuries, and whether students are being evacuated.
2. Base contacts 911, notifies Central Office, dispatches a spare bus if needed, and remains in communication with Incident Command.
3. Central Office notifies affected schools, dispatches an administrative team to the scene as Operational Command, and designates a reunification center if needed.
4. If reunification is needed, an administrator is assigned to the reunification site and medical or counseling personnel are dispatched when appropriate.
5. A media location may be designated when necessary.

Accident monitoring within a five-year period may include the following: first accident, report filed; second accident, report filed and written warning; third accident, report filed and additional driver training, including defensive driving; fourth accident, report filed and performance review.

D. Severe Weather and Tornadoes

Drivers and administrators should monitor weather reports when severe weather is possible. A tornado watch means tornadoes are possible in the area and drivers should remain alert. A tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar and shelter should be sought promptly.

- Before severe weather, drivers should be familiar with roads near their routes and should identify possible shelters such as schools, businesses, homes, or other safe buildings.
- For activity trips, drivers should have a map or other route information available to determine alternate routes to safety.
- If a warning is announced near dismissal, students should remain in the building in a designated safe area. Drivers should secure buses and go to the designated safe area in the school building.
- If a warning is announced while en route, the driver should go to the closest pre-identified shelter or safe building, depending on the immediacy of the threat.
- If caught in the direct path of a tornado and shelter is not accessible, stop and evacuate passengers. Do not attempt to outrun the tornado and do not remain on the bus.
- If evacuation is necessary, advise the school corporation of the bus number and location when possible. Seek a below-ground area, ditch, ravine, or depression away from the bus and away from power lines, utility poles, trees, and other hazards when practical. Do not use road or bridge overpasses for shelter.
- Instruct passengers to lie flat, face down, and protect their heads with a jacket, clothing, hands, or arms.
- After the emergency, account for all passengers, check for injuries, provide first aid if needed, and remain alert for additional storm activity, downed power lines, gas leaks, or structural damage.

E. Weapons On or Near the Bus

If a gun or weapon is seen on the bus:

1. Calmly radio the specific location to the Transportation Office and state that law enforcement is needed.
2. The Transportation Office will contact the proper law enforcement agency immediately.
3. Follow up with the appropriate written report and submit it immediately.
4. Report the incident to the appropriate school administrator.

If a weapon is seen at or near a bus stop:

1. Calmly radio the location and details to the Transportation Office.
2. The Transportation Office will contact the proper law enforcement agency.

3. Distance the bus and students from the threat when possible, and consider an alternate route with approval or direction from the Transportation Office.
4. Prepare a written report with names and details, if available, and submit it immediately after the route.
5. Report the incident to the appropriate school administrator.

F. Hostage or Active Threat Situations

In a hostage or active threat situation on a school bus or field trip, the driver or staff member in charge should use common sense, remain as calm as possible, protect students, and contact 911 and school officials as soon as possible.

- If in radio range, relay a message to Base.
- Call 911 and, when possible, the building administrator.
- Focus on mentally documenting what happens, what is said, descriptions, and which students are involved or taken if that occurs.
- If hostage negotiators or law enforcement arrive, follow their direction.
- Base will contact 911, notify the Superintendent, determine which students are on the bus, identify the route to the bus, notify other buses as needed, and avoid communication that could jeopardize students or staff.

Section VII: Special Needs Transportation

A. General Expectations

Special needs transportation requires skill, understanding, patience, and dedication. Drivers and aides must understand the transportation needs and safety requirements of students assigned to them.

- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- Drivers should communicate with families before school begins to discuss each student's transportation needs.
- Drivers should notify the school and Transportation Office of address changes, extended drop-off changes, or other transportation changes.
- If a new student is added to a route, the driver should contact the family before the first pickup when possible.
- Drivers and aides should follow each student's transportation plan, health plan, or emergency information when such information has been provided by the school nurse, case conference committee, building administrator, or Transportation Office.

B. Loading and Unloading

- When loading or unloading from a street, use the 8-way light system. The stop arm must remain out until all students are secured.
- Parents or caregivers are responsible for bringing the student to the bus and assisting the student onto the bus when required. Drivers and aides should not carry a student onto the bus unless specifically directed by administration.
- Parents should generally escort the student to the stairs without boarding the bus. Parent boarding should be limited to extreme circumstances.
- Lap belts must be positioned over the pelvic girdle and not around the waist or abdomen.
- Parents should be informed about assistive devices used for their student, such as car seats, safety vests, or other equipment.

C. Responsible Adult Not Present at Drop-Off

If no responsible adult is present at a required drop-off location, contact the student's home school. The school will attempt to contact the parent or guardian. If there is no answer or no authorized adult is available, the student should be returned to school. Students may not be dropped off at the Transportation Office.

D. Wheelchairs, Powerchairs, and Securement

Students who can be reasonably moved from a wheelchair, stroller, or special seating device should be transferred to an appropriate forward-facing vehicle seat or compliant student seat when required. Occupied wheelchairs must face forward and be adequately secured. Lap

boards attached to wheelchairs or adaptive equipment must be removed and secured separately during transportation.

- Drivers and aides operating lift buses must be knowledgeable in the operation of lifts, tie-downs, lap belts, assistive devices, and other safety equipment.
- When using the lift, secure the lift door, lower the lift, have the parent or caregiver assist the student onto the lift, lock the wheelchair brakes, and face the student away from the bus while on the lift.
- No one rides the lift except the student.
- Position the wheelchair in the assigned space and lock the brakes.
- Secure rear and front tie-downs to the wheelchair frame, not through wheels or around footrests. Tighten all tie-downs.
- Place lap belts over the pelvic bone and not around the waist. Shoulder belts must be placed correctly and never under the student's arm across the rib cage.
- Check that the chair is secure and all straps are tight.
- Powerchairs should follow the same procedures. Power must be turned off and disconnected, and powerchairs must be manually loaded and unloaded from the lift.

E. Child Restraint Seats

- Child restraint seats are to be used for students weighing 40 pounds or less and under 40 inches tall, or as otherwise required by the student's transportation plan.
- The safety retainer clip on child restraint seat straps must be used.
- Employees who are unfamiliar with child restraint equipment must ask for assistance before transporting the student.

F. Special Needs Aide Responsibilities

Aides assist the bus driver in safely transporting students with special needs. Specific duties include:

- Supervise students while boarding, riding, and departing the bus until custody has safely transferred to school staff or the student has returned to the home location.
- Assist students to and from the bus and while on the bus as needed, including using the lift, pushing wheelchairs, lowering or closing windows, managing behavior, assisting on stairs, and walking students across streets.
- Assist the driver by monitoring students and traffic during loading and unloading.
- Sit in the middle or rear of the bus when not assisting students, except when assigned to a wheelchair bus where another position is required.
- Ensure all students have departed the bus at the end of the route.
- Assist with body spills when needed.
- Assist the driver in maintaining a clean bus.

Section VIII: Compensation and Payroll

Transportation compensation is approved by the Board and processed through payroll procedures established by the Corporation. Employees must submit required documentation promptly and accurately.

A. Route and Substitute Pay

Assignment	Rate
Daily Pay (up to 3 hours)	\$137.02
Daily Pay - Overage (beyond 3 hours)	\$21.00 per hour
Hourly Pay (up to 3 hours)	\$32.00 per hour
Sub Driver, Full Day	\$90.00
Sub Driver, Half Day	\$45.00
Special Ed Route / John Hinds / John Hinds Sub Driver	\$100.00 for 3 hours, plus \$21.00 per hour after 3 hours, \$45.00 minimum
Special Ed Aide / Special Ed Sub Aide	\$13.00 / \$12.00 / \$18.00 per hour, minimum up to 2 hours
Coach Driving Rate, Activity Bus	\$18.00 per hour
Buddy Route, Full Day	\$90.00
Buddy Route, Half Day	\$45.00

John Hinds Career Center Route

The John Hinds route consists of transportation from Tipton High School to the John Hinds Career Center and return transportation from the John Hinds Career Center to Tipton High School in both the morning and afternoon. A driver who accepts the John Hinds route is expected to complete both the morning and afternoon portions of the route unless otherwise approved in advance by the Transportation Director or designee.

If the route must be split between drivers due to absence, emergency, or operational need, compensation will be based only on the portion of the route actually completed by each driver, unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Buddy routes: Each school year, drivers may be grouped by the Transportation Director to assist with route coverage. If a route cannot be covered, a driver's assigned buddy may be asked to complete the route. The transportation department may schedule a day for drivers to run buddy routes to gain familiarity.

Drivers and aides are paid for student days worked plus one additional day, Labor Day, to compensate for annual bus safety recertification state online testing, when applicable.

B. Driver Hourly Pay Rates by Experience

The following hourly rates apply to new drivers hired on or after January 1, 2026, and to future route assignments or other assignments placed on the hourly compensation structure.

Years of Experience	Hourly Rate	Approximate Daily Pay
0-4 years	\$32.00/hour	\$96.00
5-9 years	\$32.50/hour	\$97.50
10-14 years	\$33.00/hour	\$99.00
15-19 years	\$33.50/hour	\$100.50
20-24 years	\$34.00/hour	\$102.00
25-29 years	\$34.50/hour	\$103.50
30+ years	\$35.00/hour	\$105.00

C. Athletic, ECA, and Field Trip Pay

Trip Type	Base Pay	Additional Pay
Monday-Friday, Trips 1-5	\$36.00 minimum up to 2 hours	\$18.00 per hour thereafter
Monday-Friday, after 5 trips per year	\$50.00 minimum up to 2 hours	\$18.00 per hour thereafter
Monday-Friday, after 10 trips per year	\$60.00 minimum up to 2 hours	\$18.00 per hour thereafter
Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday, Trips 1-5	\$108.00 minimum up to 6 hours	\$18.00 per hour thereafter
Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday, after 5 trips per year	\$130.00 minimum up to 6 hours	\$18.00 per hour thereafter
Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday, after 10 trips per year	\$140.00 minimum up to 6 hours	\$18.00 per hour thereafter

School District recognized holidays are listed below:

New Year's Day	Day after Thanksgiving
President's Day	Christmas Eve
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
Fourth of July	New Year's Eve
Thanksgiving	

Appendix A: Road Condition Report

Use blue or black ink. Complete this form and forward it to the Transportation Office. A copy will be forwarded to the appropriate city, county, or state highway department. Provide specific addresses and details.

Field	Information
Driver Name	
Date	
Bus Number	
Road or Address	
City / County / State Road	
Description of Concern	
Safety Concern or Urgency	
Submitted To	Transportation Office

Appendix B: Bus Cleaning Checklist

Complete monthly and submit as directed by the Transportation Office.

Daily Item	M	T	W	Th	F
Remove trash					
Check seats and seat belt condition					
Report problems immediately					

Weekly Item	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Sweep floor					
Empty trash					
Clean windows and mirrors					
Clean seats					

Monthly Item	Completed
Exterior of bus washed	
Bus mopped	
Accurate route directions, seating chart, and emergency call list on bus	
First aid kit filled	

Month: _____

Bus Driver: _____

Bus Number: _____

Driver Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Daily Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist

Pre-trip checks are required each time a bus leaves the bus garage for routes, field trips, athletic trips, or other assignments. Document each inspection as directed by the Transportation Office.

Inspection Item	Check
Air brake check completed using the required three-step CDL procedure.	
Checked under bus for leaks, including oil, power steering fluid, coolant, or fuel.	
Checked tires for low pressure, cuts, stones, or other damage.	
Checked lights, signal lamps, reflectors, warning lights, and amber lights.	
Checked windshield, mirrors, and rear windows for visibility and cleanliness.	
Entered bus, adjusted mirrors, fastened seat belt, and started engine.	
Checked fuel, oil pressure, vacuum gauge, ammeter, temperature gauge, wipers, horn, heaters, defrosters, and engine idle.	
Checked emergency equipment, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and exits.	
Checked foot brake for firm response and proper floor clearance.	
Opened emergency door and windows; checked latch and alarm operation.	
Checked DVR or camera system, when applicable.	
Completed inspection early enough to allow repair or bus reassignment if needed.	

Month: _____

Bus Driver: _____

Bus Number: _____

Driver Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Staff Acknowledgement and Receipt

I have received a copy of the Tipton Community School Corporation Transportation Handbook. I understand that the handbook contains important information about transportation expectations, safety procedures, employee responsibilities, and student transportation procedures.

I understand that I am responsible for reading, understanding, and following the handbook, applicable Board policies, applicable law, and any revisions or directives issued by the Superintendent, Transportation Director, or designee.

Employee Name (Print): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____