TRANSPORTATION

It is the policy of the board of directors to provide safe and efficient transportation to and from school for all eligible students. Priority for transportation services, however, shall be given to students in grades kindergarten through five. It is the further intent of the board of directors to provide a transportation system for curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities during and/or outside of the normal school day, provided that such activities are eligible for district transportation pursuant to the district’s established student transportation guidelines. Students who are deemed by the district to be eligible for transportation shall receive such service.

Eligibility for transportation to/from school is based on the student’s residence, which must meet criteria established by the superintendent.

Contracting for Transportation Services

The district is authorized to seek alternative means of providing student transportation; this may include contracting with commercial carriers, cabulance or cab service, and reimbursing parents for providing service when appropriate. When doing so, the district shall abide by all appropriate laws and unit bargaining agreements.

Emergency Routes and Schedules for Daily Student Transportation

The district shall develop emergency bus routes and schedules to be used when weather conditions make the usual routes impassable or, in the superintendent’s judgment, too hazardous. At the beginning of the school year, copies of emergency routes and schedules shall be distributed to parents with instructions on how to obtain emergency information.

If roads are closed to buses but not to private vehicles, the district may continue to operate the instructional programs of the schools without providing bus transportation until the roads are again open to buses.

Extracurricular Activities

The superintendent may authorize the use of district transportation vehicles for transporting nonparticipating students to extracurricular activities. Such vehicles may be so used when the users pay an amount sufficient to reimburse the district for the complete cost of such use. Participants shall be supervised by staff. Rules of conduct for students riding school buses shall apply to buses carrying students for extracurricular activities.
Cooperative Programs

The board of directors may enter into cooperative transportation agreements with other districts when it is economically advantageous to the cooperating districts and when it does not impair the quality of educational programs available to students.

Bus Safety

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of his/her passengers, particularly for those who cross a roadway after leaving the bus. No bus driver shall order or allow a student to disembark at a location other than his/her customary boarding or alighting place unless so authorized by the director of transportation. In order to assure the safety of all, the bus driver may hold students accountable for their conduct during the course of transportation and may recommend corrective action against a student violating rules of conduct for students riding school buses.

When the district uses charter buses or excursion carriers, the driver shall not have unsupervised access to children, and children shall be supervised by a responsible employee of the district. Every contract between a school district and charter bus or excursion carrier shall contain a carrier profile from the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

When a teacher, coach or other certificated staff member is assigned to accompany students on a bus, such person shall be primarily responsible for the behavior of the students in his/her charge.

Emergencies

In the event of an accident or other emergency, the bus driver shall follow the emergency procedures in accordance with the School Bus Driver Handbook (SPI). A copy of the emergency procedures shall be located in each bus. To ensure the success of such emergency procedures, the district shall conduct an emergency bus evacuation drill within the first six weeks of each school semester. The district shall conduct such other drills and procedures as may be necessary.

Student Conduct on Buses

The district shall establish written rules of conduct for students riding school buses. Such rules shall include as a minimum the requirements of WAC 392-145-035 and shall be reviewed annually and revised if necessary.

At the beginning of each school year, a copy of the rules of conduct for students riding buses shall be provided to each student who is scheduled to ride a school bus. The classroom teacher and bus driver shall review the rules with the students at or near the beginning of each school year. A copy of the rules shall be available upon request at the district office.
Private Vehicle Transportation

The school board authorizes the use of private vehicles under the following circumstances:

A. The district may authorize/request parents/guardian to drive children to school in their own vehicles on a per-mile cost reimbursable basis. The transportation department determines when "in-lieu" transportation would be advantageous to the district and arranges its implementation. In cases where carpooling is formed by families, reimbursement shall be provided only to the parent whose car is used to transport the students to school. Privately owned or rented vehicles shall not exceed ten (10) passengers, including the driver, with seat belts provided for all occupants.

B. Upon written approval of the principal, staff may transport students when a student’s welfare is involved, and when due care dictates prompt action. The staff member shall acknowledge that he/she has the following: a valid driver’s license; maintains state of Washington minimum auto insurance requirements; and agrees to assume full responsibility for any liability, bodily injury or property damage, comprehensive or collision, made by or against the driver/owner of the vehicle. The district’s liability insurance shall only cover the district’s liability. The district’s insurance is excess over the vehicle owner’s insurance. The mileage of the staff member shall be reimbursed by the district.

C. Except in the case of an emergency, parental permission forms shall be obtained from the parents of students riding in private passenger vehicles.

Other Vehicles Used to Transport Students

Vans with a seating capacity, including the driver, of ten (10) persons or less may be used for miscellaneous to and from school transportation. The driver shall not be required to have a commercial driver’s license.

Leasing of School District Buses

Tacoma School District No. 10 may enter into a written lease agreement as lessor.

Such a lease agreement shall contain a clause absolving the district of any and all liability arising from the lessee’s use and operation of the district’s buses and a clause requiring the lessee to maintain adequate insurance to recompense the district for the potential loss of the buses leased. Potential users shall stipulate in writing that commercial or charter bus service is not reasonably available to provide the services for which a school bus is needed. The user shall reimburse the district for the actual costs plus a reasonable fee for use of the bus. Funds derived from the lease of a surplus bus shall be deposited in the transportation vehicle fund. If a bus is a part of the
regular fleet, the funds derived from a rental or lease agreement may be deposited in the general fund.

The district may also lease buses from other entities in compliance with district policy and state guidelines.

Legal References:  

RCW 28A.160 Transporting of Children to School or School Activities--Transporting of Elderly--Insurance  
28A.160.020 Authorization for Private School Students to Ride Buses--Conditions  
28A.160.030 Authorizing Individual Transportation or Other Arrangements--Pupils Must Provide Own Transportation, when  
28A.600.010 Government of Schools, Pupils, Employees, Rules and Regulations for--Due Process guarantee--Enforcement  

WAC 180-20 School Bus Transportation  
180-20-101 Minimum Qualifications of School Bus Drivers  
School District rules defining misconduct--Distribution of rules  
392-145 Transportation--Operation rules  
392-145-020 Rules for School Bus Drivers  
392-145-015 General Operating Regulations  
392-145-035 Rules for Students Riding School Buses  
392-172-204 Transportation (Handicapped)  
396-143-70 All Vehicles other than School Buses Used to Transport Students  
397-141 Transportation Authority and State Reimbursement

Adoption Date: 7/27/00