



School Bus and Operations Policy

Merit Preparatory Academy

Student Transportation Management

Transportation shall be offered for students based on need, safety, efficiency, adequacy, and economy. The following shall be taken into consideration in developing the school transportation system:

1. A school bus operator's primary responsibility is always the safety of passengers and the safety of the public.
2. Merit Preparatory Academy bus drivers are trained in a manner consistent with policy, rules and regulations pertaining to the transportation of public school students in the State of Utah.
3. Rules and regulations established by the Utah State Legislature and the Utah State Board of Education are found in Section 41-6a- 1301-1309 of the Utah Criminal and Traffic Code, 2015 Edition, the Utah Administrative Code R277-600 "Student Transportation Standards and Procedures", and Utah Administrative Code R277-601 "Standards for Utah School Buses and Operations". Items covered in this law shall be strictly enforced:
 - a. Specifications Governing New School Bus Equipment
 - b. Inspection of Buses
 - c. Qualifications for School Bus Drivers
 - d. Driving Rules and Regulations
4. Other driving regulations pertaining to school bus drivers and school transportation are set forth in the Utah Criminal and Traffic Code, 2015 Edition.
5. The school will also be in compliance with the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991.
6. The Board shall establish its school bus system to conform to or exceed minimum state and federal standards.

Student Transportation Safety

All buses and other vehicles owned and operated by Merit Preparatory Academy shall be inspected for safety by the assigned driver, a state agency, and a certified maintenance staff on a regular basis. The school shall develop and maintain a safety inspection record which shall be filled out and signed by the individual who conducts the inspection. In addition, all buses shall be available for regular state inspections by the proper state agency. Any defects noted by either the regular local or state inspection shall be remedied immediately. Bus inspections at the end of each day shall ensure all students are off the bus. If students are found on the bus during the inspection, they will be returned immediately to the last stop, an alternate location, or to the school, whichever is decided safest with guardian permission.

All drivers shall be instructed in first aid and shall hold at least a valid Standard First Aid Certificate. They should also attend all school transportation meetings as requested.

All accidents, regardless of the damage involved, must be reported to the school's transportation department. Any accident involving another vehicle, injury or death must be immediately reported to appropriate local law enforcement. Accident report forms must also be completed and filed with the school.

All emergencies should be communicated to an administrator immediately.

Bus drivers will follow all guidelines outlined in R277-601-3 of the Standards for Utah School Buses and Operations regarding the use of electronic and telecommunication devices and all other best practices found in the state manual for the Standards for Utah School Buses and Operations. This can be found at:

<https://schools.utah.gov/financialoperations/pupiltransportation?mid=2146&tid=2>

Bus Stops

1. Students eligible for transportation will not be picked up or dropped off at an unauthorized bus stop along an established bus route. They will also not be left at a bus stop for pick up if they do not have their bus pass.
2. Bus stops are determined by reasonable and timely travel distance to the school and by being centrally located to students needing transportation.
3. School bus stops will be identified along streets and highways where buses can travel with the least amount of risk.
4. Students will be assigned to a specific stop according to their registered address with the school.

Routing, Scheduling and Parking of School Buses

1. Bus routes will be provided on our school website. They will be established at the beginning of each school year according to need, economic considerations and safety practices.
2. Buses will be routed in such a manner as to provide approved transportation services that are economically feasible, safe and practical.
3. Standard procedure will be developed to station the bus in a secure area at the place of employment between route runs including, activity or field trips, when not in use, and when any savings to the school can be affected.
4. Parking a bus overnight at home will be approved only if it is clearly evident that such an arrangement will specifically benefit the school.
5. Stopping and parking of buses between regular route runs, activity or field trips, or while waiting to resume bus runs must be at safe and convenient parking areas adjacent to trip routes.
6. Drivers whose requests for home parking have been approved must consistently demonstrate that proper pre-trip inspections, maintenance, cleanliness, protection, and safety are always provided.
7. Permission for home parking, temporary mid-day parking locations, and special parking arrangements may be withdrawn at any time if it is clear that the above provisions are not being met. Deviations from assigned routes, field trips and activity trip runs will be determined by a school administrator.
8. Transportation is dependent on driver availability. The school reserves the right to cancel or delay any trip or route due to driver unavailability. Students have the right to cancel their intent to ride. Refunds will not be issued unless transportation was canceled for a class that required a transportation fee.

Bus Space Availability (routes)

1. Bus space is determined at the beginning of the school year on a first come, first served basis. This space expires at the end of each school year and may be withdrawn at any time.
2. A waiting list will be established after the buses become full and will be used to fill in open spots on the buses.
3. Riders must submit payment and a liability waiver form to the school before riding the bus.

Student Conduct

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the Board of Education shall require students to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with established standards for appropriate behavior any time they are waiting to board a bus, riding a bus, or after exiting a bus.

In cases when a student does not display proper conduct on a bus, such instances are to be brought to the attention of the school administrator by the driver. The school administrator shall inform the parents or guardians of the misconduct, and request their cooperation in remediating the concern, and inform them of any disciplinary action taken. The school's bus riding rules and consequences found in the liability waiver will be followed.

Students who become a serious safety or disciplinary problem or who have multiple minor incidents on the school bus may have their riding privileges suspended by the school administrator. In such cases, the parents or guardians of the student involved become responsible for transporting their student to and from school safely.

Due Process: Unresolved issues or complaints related to student conduct or the consequences thereof, will be decided by the student's school administration in cooperation with the bus driver who reported the incident.

Board Approved: 2/21/23