

IDAHO SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL BUS DRIVER MANUAL



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Students with Disabilities

The education of students with disabilities is firmly rooted in the constitutional guarantees involved in the “protection of vulnerable minorities.” This relationship means that the provision of services to students with disabilities is a basic civil right protected by the U.S. Constitution. The existence of a disability does not, by itself, mean that a student is eligible for transportation as a related service. To be eligible for services under the law, a student must have a disability that adversely affects educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.

Under IDEA, in order to be eligible for transportation as a related service, students must be identified under one or more of the following categories: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Deaf-Blindness, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Developmental Delay, Emotional Behavioral Disorder, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Visual Impairment including Blindness. If a student with a disability needs only a related service and not special education, then the student is not eligible, unless the related service is considered to be special education under state standards. (In Idaho, speech therapy and language therapy are considered to be special education.)

1.2 Laws Defining Disabilities

Three federal laws have been passed to ensure these constitutional guarantees for individuals with disabilities:

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a comprehensive civil rights law barring discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

The ADA is based on five key principles that have been viewed historically as civil rights for individuals with disabilities:

1. a focus on the individual;
2. integration;
3. equal opportunity;
4. physical accessibility; and

5. the provision of reasonable accommodation and auxiliary aids and services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Individuals with disabilities cannot be excluded from or denied the benefits of any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997

The reauthorization of IDEA 1997 emphasized both access to education and improved results for students with disabilities based on data and public accountability.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A written document (developed collaboratively by parents and school personnel) which outlines the special education program for a student with a disability. This document is developed, reviewed, and revised at an IEP meeting at least annually. A team established by the IDEA and comprised of the student’s general education teacher, a special education teacher, a district representative, parents, the student when appropriate, and other knowledgeable persons is known as the **IEP Team**. The team is responsible for developing an IEP, determining placement, and reviewing and revising the student’s IEP and placement at least annually.

Related services

Refers to transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education and includes, in addition to transportation, speech therapy, language therapy, audiology services, psychological services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes, school nurse services, social work services in schools, interpreter services, and parent counseling and training.

Specific to the student’s transportation needs may include:

- Travel to and from school and between schools to access special education.
- Travel in and around school buildings.
- Specialized equipment, including lifts and ramps, if required to provide special transportation.

Other services that support the student’s use of special transportation, such as:

- Special assistance (e.g., an aide on the bus and assistance getting on and off the bus);
- Safety restraints, wheelchair restraints, and child safety seats;
- Accommodations (e.g., preferential seating, a positive behavioral support plan for the student on the bus, and altering the bus route);
- Training for the bus driver regarding the student’s disability or special health-related needs; or
- Attending non-academic and extracurricular activities, if required by the IEP.

1.3 Transporting the Special Needs Student

Transportation for students with disabilities is a highly personalized service, requiring a thorough assessment of the student’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual capacities and making allowances for existing handicaps. Unless it is specifically stated in a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) that they must receive specialized transportation, each student with a disability is to be placed in an instructional setting that most closely approximates the learning environment of their non-disabled peers (regular classroom) in a manner beneficial to the individual student and students in the regular classroom. This is called the “least restrictive environment” and applies to transportation as well as the classroom. In other words, if a child is able to ride a “regular” bus, they should not be segregated onto a “special education” bus.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) refers to an IDEA requirement that students with disabilities be educated (and transported) with students who are non-disabled to the maximum extent appropriate.

1.4 Determining Special Transportation Needs

If the student has medical, physical, or behavioral issues, the following questions may need to be addressed by the IEP team.

1. Can the student be safely transported, without undue risk to the student or others, given the transportation environment, including the length of the ride?
2. Does the student have medical, physical, or behavioral concerns that would expose them to unreasonable risk, given the anticipated transportation environment?
3. Can assistive or adaptive equipment identified as necessary to accommodate the student during the transportation process (such as a mobile seating device, gurney, ventilator, or

oxygen equipment) be safely secured and transported, and are there adequate instructions regarding its use?

4. Does the student have a health care plan that specifies (a) the type and frequency of care required or expected, (b) the skill level of the person expected to give the care, (c) whether general observation of the student by the driver would be adequate, or (d) whether a staff person independent of the driver is needed to address the student's needs?
5. Does the student have a behavioral intervention plan outlining positive behavior strategies and supports to address behavior when needed? Does that plan include strategies and supports for the transportation environment? Is the driver aware of the plan and trained to handle possible situations? Is another adult needed on the bus?

1.5 Characteristics of Various Disabilities

The varying needs of students with disabilities may require transportation personnel to have some familiarity with a wide range of practices and services. Whatever the situation, transportation personnel are expected to and must be ready to serve the student's needs. At a minimum, this will require a comprehensive in-service training program – with periodic updates - to familiarize transporters with the characteristics of their special populations. It is recommended that the driver become as familiar as possible with the above disabilities. The most common disabilities that a school bus driver may encounter are:

- **Autism Spectrum Disorder**

An IDEA disability category in which a developmental disability, generally evident in the early developmental period, significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interactions and adversely affects educational performance.

- **Intellectual Disability**

An IDEA disability category in which significantly sub-average intellectual functioning exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior. These deficits are manifested during the student's developmental period and adversely affect the student's educational performance.

- **Deaf-Blindness**

An IDEA disability category in which a student demonstrates hearing and visual impairments and where the combination of these two disabilities causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that the student cannot be appropriately educated with special education services designed solely for students with deafness or blindness.

- **Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

An IDEA disability category in which a hearing loss, whether permanent or fluctuating, impairs the access, comprehension, and/or use of linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification adversely affects educational performance.

- **Developmental Delay**

An IDEA disability category used only for students ages 3 until their 10th birthday who experience developmental delay in one or more of the following skill areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional, and adaptive development.

- **Emotional Behavioral Disorder**

An IDEA disability category in which a student has a condition exhibiting one or more of the behavioral or emotional characteristics over a long period of time, and to a marked degree, that adversely affects educational performance.

These characteristics include:

1. an inability to learn that is not the result of intellectual disability, hearing, vision, or motor impairment, or other health impairment;
2. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
3. inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
4. a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression;
5. a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems; or
6. Schizophrenia.

- **Other Health Impairment**

An IDEA disability category in which a student exhibits limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that is due to chronic or acute health problems (such as asthma, ADD or ADHD, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia) to such a degree that it adversely affects the student's educational performance.

- **Language impairment**

An IDEA disability category in which a delay or disorder exists in the development of comprehension and/or the uses of spoken or written language and/or other symbol systems and which adversely affects the student's educational performance. A language impairment may involve any one or a combination of the following: the form of language (morphological and syntactic systems); the content of language (semantic systems); and/or the function of language in communication (pragmatic systems).

- **Specific Learning Disability**

An IDEA disability category in which a specific disorder of one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, adversely affecting the student's educational performance. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include a student who has needs that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; cognitive impairment; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

- **Multiple Disabilities**

An IDEA disability category in which two or more severe impairments co-exist (excluding deaf-blindness), whose combination causes such severe educational problems that the student cannot be accommodated in special education services designed solely for one of the impairments. Multiple disabilities are generally lifelong, significantly interfere with independent functioning, and may necessitate environmental modifications to enable the student to participate in school and society.

- **Orthopedic Impairment**

An IDEA disability category that includes physical impairments that adversely affects a student's educational performance and are caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of an appendage, etc.); disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.); or from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contracture).

- **Speech Impairment**

An IDEA disability category that includes articulation/phonology, voice, and fluency disorders.

- **Traumatic Brain Injury**

An IDEA disability category that refers to an injury to the brain caused by an external physical force and resulting in a total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory perception, and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not apply to congenital or degenerative brain injuries or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

- **Visual Impairment including Blindness**

An IDEA disability category characterized by impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes partial sight, which refers to the ability to use vision as one channel of learning if educational materials are adapted, and blindness, which refers to the prohibition of vision as a channel of learning, regardless of the adaptation of materials.

SECTION II

DRIVER PREPARATION, ATTITUDE, AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The success of programs for students with disabilities depends upon the people who have daily contact with the children. Such people should possess characteristics which are different in kind and degree from the average. They should have extra patience, mental alertness, flexibility, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, emotional stability, personal warmth, friendliness, understanding, and empathy. A driver should be able to develop and maintain rapport with children and be able to exercise mature judgment in relation to both the care of students with disabilities and the responsibilities of driving.

A driver should be aware of and be willing to support the objectives of the student's therapeutic needs as written in the IEP. Accept the child and their problems and treat the child in a kind, courteous and professional manner. The daily bus ride can be an important part of a child's progress toward independence. The child will learn how to leave their home, meet the bus, cross the street, and behave on the bus. You will explain the bus rules and help the student learn to obey them. The bus ride can be a pleasant experience, or it can be a dreaded experience. Be thoughtful and careful about routine matters such as assigning a seat or seatmate, the presentation and purpose of a seat belt, or about using discipline. Your primary purpose is to take students to and from school safely and dependably. A student's social adjustment may be less important than the safety of others on the bus.

2.1 Management Strategy

- Do not look angry.
- Use simple words.
- Use slow, deliberate speech.
- Observe closely.
- Play music.
- Be firm and CONSISTENT.
- Become familiar with proper procedures and policies.
- Establish rules for acceptable behavior on the bus.
- Create a seating chart and separate prospective troublemakers.

- Treat all students the same; don't show favoritism.
- Obtain the cooperation of the students with a "We're All In This Together" attitude.
- Incorporate IEP classroom behavior goals to bus behavior goals as appropriate.
- Communicate with parents/group home personnel on suggestions and helps.
- Communication with Child Study Team members as needed.

2.2 Communication

Parents Need To

- Know the pick-up and drop-off times so someone can be there.
- Know the exact location for pick up and drop off.
- Make special arrangements for bad weather, early dismissals, and unplanned delays.
- Provide emergency numbers and information in case of problems.
- The Driver Should Have Appropriate Background Information.
- Have the name, address, and phone number of the student.
- Have parent/guardian name and work phone number.
- Have knowledge of the medical background, doctor's name, and phone number, disability, or condition.
- Know what special equipment is needed (wheelchair, oxygen, etc.).
- Have a list of emergency contact persons for an individual student: name and phone numbers.
- Know whether the student can be released if no one is at the drop-off location.

Public Relations

- Show a positive attitude.
- Every day is a new ride.
- Maintain consistency.
- Be flexible
- Do not be afraid to set limits and allow appropriate behavior within those limits.
- Show understanding.
- Catch the student being good.
- Leave the past alone.

2.3 Student Accountability and Observation

- Report evidence of neglect and abuse.
- Report sexual harassment.
- Report seizures or other unusual incidents.

2.4 Universal Precautions

- Maintain ongoing communication with parents, school staff, school medical staff, and/or the physician of a student known to be infectious.
- Wash hands after completing bus runs. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and running water for 20 seconds.
- Disposable gloves must always be worn when in contact with any body fluids.
- Avoid rubbing or touching one's eyes.
- Refrain from kissing or being kissed by students.
- Avoid the use of excessive jewelry during working hours.
- Do not share one's personal care items.
- Keep fingernails clean and trimmed.

2.5 On the Bus Procedures

- Wear disposable or utility gloves.
- Clean and disinfect all soiled, washable surfaces as soon as possible, removing soil before applying disinfectant.
- Small Spills: Use paper towels or tissue to wipe up soiled areas.
- Large Spills: Apply a commercial sanitary absorbent agent on the soiled area. Put all material into a sealable plastic bag. Disinfect the area.
- Clean and disinfect all bus equipment according to manufacturers' directions.
- If possible, clothing and other non-disposable items should be placed in plastic bags.
- Discard disposable gloves in a covered waste receptacle.
- Plastic bags should be secured and disposed of after the bus run when used.

SECTION III

OPERATIONS

3.1 Pick-Up and Drop-Off Locations

See local district policy.

3.2 Loading and Unloading

The bus attendant should stand at the bottom of the stairs and the driver at the top of the stairs at the service door to assist the student(s) as needed.

3.3 General Principles for Lift

- Be sure the lift base is in the widest possible position.
- Be sure the area is clear.
- Be sure the passenger is secure, lift a few inches, and check the passenger again before moving the lift.
- Ensure wheelchair brakes are set.
- Ensure required safety belts and devices are in place.
- Ensure the power is shut off on an electric wheelchair.
- Never leave a passenger alone on a lift.
- A student in a wheelchair should face away from the bus when loading/unloading.
- See the lift operation manual for using the backup (manual) system on a lift.

3.4 Wheelchair Safety

- Always ensure the chair brakes are securely on while a student is waiting.
- Always make sure a student's safety belt is securely fastened.
- On a ramp or incline, back down a ramp with the wheelchair. Push the passenger up a ramp facing forward.
- On curbs, back wheelchairs down a curb. Use the tipping lever with your foot to place the front wheels on the curb. Lift up and push forward to get the back wheels on the curb.
- Desirable features for transportation include a tubular metal frame, four wheels, and a high backrest, preferably with an extension to protect the head and neck, batteries (when fitted) are carried below seat height, that are adequately secured against acid spillage.

- See manufacturer's manual for wheelchair securement directions. Discuss forward-facing and 4-point securement.

3.5 Car Seats, Safety Seats & Booster Seats

- Ensure that a federally approved car seat is the correct size for the student.
- Ensure the car seat has adequate shoulder/waist restraints.
- Ensure that an approved car seat can be safely secured on the bus with the seat belt in a seat belt designed seat.
- Booster seats are not recommended for school buses.
- It is important to check with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the latest information on the use of car seats, booster seats, and safety vests.

3.6 Lifting Techniques

- Never lift a child by their clothing.
- Never lift a child by their arms.
- Never lift a child who is too heavy for the person assisting.
- If a child can sit up without help, slide the child forward on the seat before lifting.
- Plan the job.
- Prepare and secure the equipment.
- Allow ample room for good footing.
- Wear shoes with good support.
- Face load squarely.
- Lower your body to the level of the load.
- Bend legs (squat).
- Keep back straight and avoid arching.
- Tuck in the pelvis so the lower back can take the weight of the load safely.
- Do not lift from a kneeling position.
- Get a good grasp - make sure the grip is firm.
- Do a trial lift to check the weight of the load. A driver should not lift a load that is over one-fourth of the driver's personal body weight.
- Straighten legs in a steady upward thrust when rising to a standing position.
- Hold the load close to the body to provide the best mechanical advantage.
- Avoid twisting to change directions; move feet in short steps toward the new direction while keeping the body in good alignment.

- Lifting a child with a weak trunk and shoulder girdle (two persons required).
- The person lifting the trunk should fold the child's arms across their chest.
- The lifter then places their arms under the child's upper arms, grasps the child's forearms, and signals when to lift.
- The other person supports the child's legs under the knees.
- This technique is especially useful for children with muscular dystrophy.

Children with body jackets:

- If a two-person lift is required, the trunk is lifted as described above.
- If the child is light enough for a one-person lift, place one arm under the thighs and the other behind the back, leaning the child's back against your arm.
- Remember, if you lift with your hands pressing against the jacket, you will slide the jacket, and it won't fit correctly.

During a field trip, the teacher is the number one monitor and should be given the same instructions as above. The driver should list the students that will be a problem during an evacuation by seat number and recommendations for handling these students. This list should be in writing and posted in a prominent location. Usually, outside help will be available very quickly and should assist only under the direction of the driver. The driver should always remain calm and show authority. This will greatly assist in handling the students.

3.7 Transporting Life Support Systems and Medical/Technical Devices

Some students with disabilities require the help of special equipment or devices. The first consideration in transporting a student who uses auxiliary equipment is: can the equipment be removed from the student's immediate person for transport? If possible, seek to schedule the use of each individual piece of equipment so that the student does not need to use the equipment or systems while riding the bus.

Never alter the manner, schedule, frequency, or duration of the student's use of special equipment or systems without first consulting medical professionals!

Using special equipment and systems while riding the bus increases the risk of injury to the student and creates additional problems in the safe transport of the equipment. Removing the student from their equipment for transport simplifies the task of the transportation provider. The second consideration is to ensure that all equipment and equipment components are firmly secured. The National Standards for School Buses states: "Portable student equipment or special accessory items shall be secured at the mounting locations to withstand a pulling force of five times the weight of the item, or shall be retained in an enclosed, latched compartment." The first choice for securing

many types of items is the use of an outside luggage compartment. However, due to weather, dust, and other factors, this may not be an option for some types of equipment. Also, the student may need to have quick access to the equipment in an emergency.

Other choices for securing auxiliary equipment include inside, onboard, enclosed compartments, various mounting brackets, and tie-down straps. A belt-style wheelchair tie-down can be used to secure other types of equipment when not used for wheelchairs. The third consideration is that the equipment must be secured during travel and traffic emergencies in order to protect passengers. The padded interior of the bus, including the absence of sharp, hard, protruding edges, is designed to protect passengers during an emergency.

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 222 requires that all student seats have a padded barrier in front of the students. If seats are removed to make room for equipment, the integrity of the seat/barrier design must be maintained. Barriers may need to be added when seats are removed. Therefore, the rear of the bus is a good place for enclosed compartments and other securement brackets. Brackets and other mounting devices should be padded when possible and located to limit student exposure in traffic emergencies.

If the student must use the special equipment while being transported, the same considerations should be made when placing the equipment next to the student. If the equipment is located on the wheelchair, it should be secured to the bus. If that is not possible or practical, determine that the wheelchair mount meets the above criteria and does not compromise the integrity of the wheelchair. When in doubt, the transportation specialist should consult the wheelchair's manufacturer.

Medical support equipment, which may include respiratory devices such as oxygen bottles (which should be no longer than 22 cubic feet for liquid oxygen and 38 cubic feet for compressed gas) or ventilators. Tanks and valves should be located and positioned to protect them from direct sunlight, bus heater vents, or other heat sources. Other equipment may include intravenous and fluid drainage apparatus.

All portable equipment and special accessory items, including the equipment listed above, shall be secured at the mounting location to withstand a pulling force of five times the item's weight or be retained in an enclosed, latched compartment. The compartment shall be capable of withstanding forces applied to its interior equal to five times the weight of its contents without failure to the box's integrity and securement to the bus. Exception: If these standards provide specific requirements for securement of a particular type of equipment, the specific standard shall prevail (e.g., wheelchairs).

Small personal bottles must be safely secured. Consideration must be given to the potential release of oxygen and the possibility of a fire hazard in a collision. Bottles should always be transported with the valve in the off position. Exceptions should only be made for emergency needs.

- **Respirators**

Similar considerations exist as those for oxygen bottles.

- **Assistive Equipment**

Care should be taken when securing the student who uses assistive equipment. Ensure that safety straps and other components of safety devices or assistive equipment do not create difficulties or hazards for the student. Devices and equipment may include but are not limited to walkers, crutches, and canes. These are items that could go in an outside luggage compartment; however, the student may require immediate access to this type of equipment in an emergency. Never transport equipment that is not securely tied down.

- **Unoccupied Wheelchairs**

If the wheelchair is collapsible, consider storing it in the outside luggage compartment. If a chair is transported inside, secure it so that it faces the aisle. Check for loose seat panels and other components which may not be secured to the frame, and secure them properly.

- **Wheel Chair Lap Tray**

Always remove the lap tray from the wheelchair, and secure it properly, whether the wheelchair is occupied or unoccupied.

- **Gurney**

If the gurney is occupied, carefully weigh the options for transporting the child with disabilities. It may be better if the child is transported in another vehicle, such as an ambulance. It is difficult to safely secure a student on a gurney. If the gurney is unoccupied, properly secure the frame and all its components.

- **Personal Protection/Assistive Devices**

Safety helmets, limb braces, neck collars, etc., must be properly secured on the passenger to avoid injury.

Some assistive equipment is a necessary part of the student and cannot or should not be removed.

Bus drivers and attendants should be trained in the proper handling of specific equipment or damage may result to the equipment. This training should be given by appropriate medical personnel and/or therapists. If a bus team member notices a need for a change or adjustment in a student's equipment or seating requirements, they should notify the student's school staff immediately. All decisions regarding the student's equipment or seating requirements should be made by the appropriate IEP team members, including a transportation professional.

SECTION IV

BUS EVACUATIONS

The primary responsibility of the school bus driver is to provide safe transportation for students. Being involved in a traffic collision is always difficult. No driver expects a traffic collision or vehicle breakdown. There is no such thing as an “on purpose” incident; almost every traffic collision is “an accident, to some extent.” All school bus drivers are instructed in the safe operation of the school bus. Part of this operation is the safe evacuation of the bus in the event of a collision or emergency.

The driver will evacuate the bus if:

- There is any indication that the bus is on fire or in danger of catching fire.
- The bus cannot be moved to a safe place, out of harm’s way.
- A natural emergency requires evacuation.
- Any time the driver believes that the safety of the children is in jeopardy.

The most important part of a safe school bus evacuation is developing and practicing a safe plan before an emergency actually occurs. *It is important to enlist the help of school liaisons, parents, and other personnel, such as physical therapists, to train and help students understand emergency procedures. Local emergency personnel should be involved in developing the plans, especially if the students transported have complex medical conditions.* Bus staff should have an emergency evacuation plan which considers the individual capabilities and needs of each student, the type of behavior that might be exhibited during an emergency evacuation, and the type of wheelchair or support equipment being used for students.

Some issues to consider when establishing an evacuation plan:

- Which students can help, and to what extent?
- How to deal with individual emergencies, such as seizures, during the evacuation process.
- Whether students should be evacuated in their wheelchairs or removed from their wheelchairs before evacuation.
- How to disconnect or cut wheelchair securement and occupant protection equipment, including belts, trays, and other support equipment.
- Identify students who may tend to run away after an evacuation; evacuate these students last.
- Know the survival time of a student that requires life support equipment or medical care procedures and if such a service can be interrupted or delayed during the evacuation process. Plan accordingly.

During an actual evacuation or drill, evacuate passengers as quickly as possible:

- Lower side lift halfway if operating.
- Release chairs one at a time and remove the chair from the bus by first lowering the chair to the lift and then to the ground.
- Electric chairs are too heavy for this. Remove the student from the chair and carry the student out of the bus.)

What can be done when rear or side emergency doors cannot be opened:

- Remove ambulatory passengers from the bus and send them to a safe location. Instruct them to sit in a group.
- Remove wheelchair passengers from their chairs and carry them from the bus to a safe location away from the bus.

Every bus staff person should be able to verbally articulate their emergency evacuation plan upon request without hesitation. Many emergencies only allow three to five minutes to complete an evacuation before possible serious injury to students might occur.

4.1 Evacuating Ambulatory Students from the Special Needs Bus

Many states insist that all bus-riding students experience a practical school bus evacuation drill as part of a yearly lesson on school bus safety. This means that ALL students that ride a school bus during the school year, for ANY reason, will usually take part in this drill. Such drills are usually scheduled by student transportation personnel and supervised by the school administrator or their designee. School bus drivers should never attempt to schedule or conduct a school bus evacuation drill on their own. Drills are usually conducted at school or on school property. All bus-riding students must participate, including those transported only on extracurricular trips. All students with disabilities should participate in bus evacuation drills. However, some students with disabilities may not be required to physically leave or be taken from the bus during a bus evacuation drill because of their medically fragile condition. School staff should determine a suitable alternative preparation for the students, driver, and school bus aide in these situations. Check district policy on this particular guideline.

The most important part of any safe bus evacuation or evacuation drill is developing and following a plan of action in the event of an emergency, school bus collision, or vehicle breakdown. Make sure that everyone on the bus is aware of what must be done in the event of a real emergency.

Always use extreme care during an evacuation or evacuation drill. Never allow students to push or run. Never force students to jump from the bus during a bus evacuation drill. A bus evacuation drill should be a learning experience for everyone.

Remember, the planning and actions taken during a bus evacuation drill may one day save lives.

There are at least three methods of evacuating a school bus in emergency situations.

- Front door evacuation
- Emergency exit evacuation (rear, side, and roof hatches)
- Front and emergency exit evacuation

Individual district policies will determine which of the evacuation plans will be used during a drill.

4.2 Evacuating Non-ambulatory Students from the Special Needs Bus

Students who ride to and from school in wheelchairs or other mobile seating devices must be given special consideration when it is necessary to evacuate them from a school bus, either in a drill or in a real emergency. A good practice would be to develop written plans for the safe evacuation of students with unique and special needs who are transported by school buses. It is essential that everyone on the bus knows the plan of evacuation and clearly understands their role during an evacuation.

SECTION V

TRANSPORTATION/ DISCIPLINE

5.1 Disciplinary Action

If the IEP team determines that special transportation is required and documents it on the IEP, all procedural safeguards under the IDEA 2004 must be afforded to the student in matters concerning transportation. Whether a suspension from the bus counts as a suspension from school depends on whether bus transportation is identified on the IEP.

If bus transportation is on the IEP, a suspension from the bus would be treated as a suspension from school (unless the district provides transportation services in some other way, such as “transportation in lieu of”) because transportation is necessary for the student to obtain access the location where all other services will be delivered.

If bus transportation is not on the IEP, a suspension from the bus would not be counted as suspension from school. In these cases, the student and the parent would have the same obligation to get to and from school as a student without a disability who had been suspended from the bus.

If the student’s behavior on the bus results in a suspension from the bus, the IEP team must consider whether the behavior should be addressed in a BIP. Schools are encouraged to address student misconduct through appropriate school-wide discipline policies, instructional services, and/or related services. If a student has behavior problems that interfere with their learning or the learning of others, an individualized education program (IEP) team must consider using strategies, including positive behavioral supports and interventions, to address the behavior. If the IEP team determines that such services are needed, they must be included in the IEP and be implemented.

Students with disabilities who are subject to disciplinary actions by a district are entitled to all of the due process rights afforded to students without disabilities under Idaho Code §33-205. In addition to these rights, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) provides special education rights and additional discipline procedures to a student with a disability whom the district is removing from their current educational placement.

These procedures come into play only when the district is unable to work out an appropriate placement for the student with the parent/adult student. Further, these procedures do not prevent district personnel from maintaining a safe environment conducive to learning that is critical for all students.

Even though Idaho Code allows district personnel to “temporarily suspend” students for up to 20 school days, all students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled for more than ten cumulative school days in a school year retain the right to a free appropriate public education. (FAPE).

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status in any educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. (Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.)

It is the policy of the Idaho State Department of Education not to discriminate in any educational programs, activities, or employment practices.

Inquiries regarding compliance with this nondiscriminatory policy may be directed to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0027, (208) 332-6800, or to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Seattle Office, U.S. Department of Education, 915 Second Avenue, Seattle WA 98174-1099, (206) 220-7880; FAX (206) 220-7887.