# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. School District Responsibility 2

B. Parent Responsibility 3, 4

C. Walking Zones 5

D. Student Responsibility 6

E. Discipline Policy 7

F. Responsible Thinking Process 7

G. Illness Policy 8

H. Adaptive Equipment Policy 8

I. Frequently Asked Questions 9

J. Forms:
   - Alternate Busing Form 10
   - SRC Bus Referral Form 11
   - Loss of Bus Privilege Form 12

K. Cell Phone and Electronic 13, 14
   Communication Devices

L. Weather Related Closing and Delays 15
Alma Public Schools
Pupil Transportation Handbook

The Alma Public School District (APS) has developed a transportation system in order to provide school transportation for the classroom programs operated by APS. This program is operated as a service for students in the Alma Public School District.

This Pupil Transportation Handbook has been developed to provide communication regarding the safe transportation of students. Included in this handbook are sections on Agency, Parent and Student Responsibility, Illness Policy, and Discipline Policy. It is our goal to see parents, classroom staff, and transportation personnel work together to provide a safe and efficient transportation system for the students of APS.

APS Transportation is provided as a service for eligible students. Therefore, it is necessary to operate with the following conditions in mind:

1. Appropriate student conduct must be maintained in order to assure safe transportation for all students.

2. Designated pick-up and drop-off points defined by the district must be adhered to in order to maintain an efficient transportation system. The district cannot accommodate a “personalized service” for each student or family due to the complexity of the system and the effects multiple changes can make on each route or schedule. Each student will be picked up and dropped off at their legal residence or bus-stop. Parents or guardians desiring an alternate pickup or drop off location will supply the school with one alternate pickup or drop off location which must be requested in writing. (Please See Alternate Bussing Form).

Riding a school bus is a privilege and the standards of behavior on a bus are similar to the standards of behavior used in the classrooms. Misbehavior on a bus creates a hazard to the safety and welfare for all students on the bus.

Please contact the transportation office at (989) 463-3116 for further clarification. We hope this information is helpful to our cooperative efforts in transportation.
A - School District Responsibility

Alma Public School District shall:

1. Develop the bus routes and schedules encompassing the entire APS service area. Busses will not travel on non-public roads or roads not maintained by a public body. Busses will not travel on road determined to be unsafe for vehicles and passengers.

2. Make assignments to specific busses and bus-stops for each student. Eligible-to-ride students will be assigned to use a specific bus and bus stop and shall not be permitted to use any other without prior permission from the transportation office. In order to maintain the safest and most efficient system possible only assigned students may ride school-bound and home-bound busses. In addition, students may ride only their assigned bus and get on and off at their designated stop.

The Transportation Director may grant permission for a student to ride a different bus or use a different stop. Such permission may be granted only upon receipt of a written request from the parent or guardian and only for a specified period of time that is subject to the following conditions and limitations:

   a. The requested change must not result in the overcrowding of any bus or result in an alteration of any regular bus route, bus stop, or time schedule, or interfere with the regular operation of the transportation system. Examples of a requested change may include the following:

      • To relieve a temporary situation which would otherwise create a severe hardship on a pupil getting to and from school.
      • For other emergency or unusual reason as shall be approved by the Transportation Director.

   b. To avoid overloads, students may not bring home friends for parties, homework, etc. either from another bus run or from a non-bussing area. Students are not allowed to get off busses anywhere other than their designated stop.

3. Provide each driver with a roster of each student on his/her bus which shall include: name, address, pick-up and drop-off times and the school to which the student is transported.

4. Provide vehicles which meet the requirements of state laws pertaining to vehicles utilized for the transportation of school students.

5. Provide insurance coverage.

6. Hire certified drivers and provide qualified aides where needed.

7. Suspend APS classes during inclement weather and notify radio and television stations in the area of such actions.

8. Develop disciplinary procedures for students who participate in APS transportation.

9. Provide in-service training for the transportation staff.
**B - Parent Responsibility**

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to ensure that their children know, understand and follow all bus rules. Listed below are some suggestions:

1. Teach your child that riding the school bus is a privilege. This privilege may be temporarily or permanently revoked if a child’s behavior jeopardizes the safe operation of a bus. Every bus driver has the right to operate the bus safely and every student has the right to a safe ride to and from school.

2. Have your child ready at the bus stop at least five minutes before the pick-up time. This avoids delays at individual stops.

3. Call the bus driver or transportation office in advance if your child will not be riding the bus for any reason including illness. This is very important in that it saves time for the driver and can shorten the ride for some students.

4. Complete an “Alternate Bussing/Babysitter Information Form.” Alma Public Schools will accept one drop-off or pick-up location besides the student’s home address. This system must be adhered to at all times to maintain effective schedules for “all” students. (Form Attached)

5. Make arrangements to have someone at home to receive the student. All pre-school, young 5, kindergarten, and 1st grade students must have someone visible at the student bus-stop to meet them at the bus. Please note that if no one is at the stop to pick-up the student we will make one call to the parent. If there is no response, the student will remain on the bus and ride to the end of the bus route. If no parent/guardian is able to pick up the student from the end of the route, the student will be turned over to a responsible agency (i.e., City Police, Sheriff’s Department, Department of Social Services, etc.). It is the parent’s responsibility to pay for all cost incurred and to pick up the student as soon as possible.

6. Take their student home should the student become ill after arriving at school.

7. Parents/guardians need to work with the transportation staff to address student misbehavior. Student misbehavior on the bus creates a safety hazard for the bus driver and students riding on the bus. All students have the right to a safe ride to and from school and the bus driver has the right to drive the bus safely. If a student misbehaves, the parent or guardian will be contacted requesting cooperation to help improve the student’s behavior. If the misbehavior continues, the district will follow student transportation disciplinary procedures. Student discipline is a process, it is progressive, and parent involvement is necessary to help teach the student how to behave. Continuing student misbehavior may result in the loss of bus-riding privileges, at which time the parent or guardian will be responsible to transport their student to and from school.

8. The parent or guardian of a student who willfully damages school property shall be responsible for the full cost, both time and material, to restore the damaged property.

9. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to keep animals away from bus loading areas. Unleashed animals can distract students who are loading or unloading putting them in danger walking into a danger zone around a bus.
10. Parents/guardians need to make transportation changes, by calling the transportation office, before drivers begin their routes. Bus drivers are not allowed to make route or stop changes during their route or without authorization.

11. The APS Transportation Department recommends that parents label outer clothing (coats, hats, mittens) so they can be identified if left on the bus or lost.

12. All students in the 6th to 12th grade who live within the city limits of Alma are in the walking zone and will not be transported to or from school. (See AHS/DLPMS Walking Zone Map)

13. All students in the 2nd and 3rd grade who live in the Hillcrest Elementary walking zone will not be transported to or from school. (See Hillcrest Walking Zone Map)

14. All students in the 4th and 5th grade who live in the Pine Avenue Elementary walking zone will not be transported to or from school. (See Pine Avenue Walking Zone Map)
C - Walking Zones

Hillcrest Elementary Walk Zone

Pine Ave Elementary Walk Zone

Alma High School and Donald L Pavlik Middle School Walk Zone
The students of Alma Public Schools have the right to a safe ride and the bus driver has the right to drive the bus safely. Riding a bus is a privilege and inappropriate behavior may result in a suspension of bus riding privileges. The following rules for bus riding apply:

1. For your safety always listen and follow the directions of the bus driver.
2. For your safety always sit squarely in your seat facing forward.
3. Always respect others and yourself and the property of others.
4. Always use your inside voice and make sure your conversations are appropriate.
5. Use of electronic devices is allowed with restrictions. For the privacy of others: (No cell phone calls, No texting, No video recording, No picture taking)
6. For your safety food and drink on the bus are not allowed.
7. For your safety and others do not put anything, especially your hands or head, out the window.
8. Respect others and do not refuse to share a seat. The bus driver may assign seats.
9. Absolutely no tobacco, tobacco products, lighters, drugs, or weapons of any kind are allowed on the bus.
10. Be respectful by being at your designated pickup location on time and ready to board the bus when it arrives.
11. No animals will be transported. Any projects, band instruments, or any other objects must be held on the student’s lap.
12. All students will be transported to and from their home residence unless prior arrangements have been made through the transportation office.
13. For any student 1st grade and younger, the driver must see a responsible person before the student will be allowed to exit the bus. Should there be no one at the stop to pick up the student, the driver will transport the student back to the transportation office until someone can be reached or proper authorities contacted.

Please Note: If your child does not ride for 3 days in a row, the driver will not stop to pick up your child until arrangements have been made with the transportation office first. The Transportation Office can be reached at 463-3116 from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday during the school year. Voice mail is available for messages at all times.
E - Discipline Policy

The transportation of students is an important function of our school district. All students have the right to a safe and enjoyable ride to and from school and each bus driver has the right to drive the bus safely. Bus riding is a privilege and may be suspended if inappropriate behavior is exhibited. We take safety seriously and every precaution must be taken to see that students are transported to and from school safely.

Alma Public Schools has developed student behavior guidelines for our bus riders that are consistent with the behavioral guidelines found in each classroom. We believe that the good conduct of all transported students is the primary key for a safe and enjoyable ride for all students. As mentioned above failure of a student to abide by the safe bus riding rules could result in a loss of bus riding privileges. It is our goal to work with parents and staff to educate those students who violate safe bus riding rules before a loss of bus privileges occurs. This is accomplished through the “Responsible Thinking Process.”

F – Responsible Thinking Process

1. When a student disrupts on a bus he or she will be asked by the bus driver to move to the Responsible Thinking Seat where (time permitting) they will be asked a series of “Responsible Thinking Questions.” These questions are asked to start a conversation that will help the student recognize their misbehavior that has created an unsafe condition on the bus.
   a. What are you doing?
   b. What are the rules?
   c. What happens to others when you break the rules?
   d. What will happen if you disrupt again?

   The goal at this point is to get the student to realize their misbehavior and agree to correct their misbehavior. The student may be assigned a seat until the bus driver feels they are ready to return to the seat of their choice.

2. If the student chooses to continue to misbehave or fails to work with the bus driver to correct their misbehavior, they will be assigned a seat and be informed they have chosen to go to the Student Responsibility Center (SRC) at their school where they will be asked to write an RTP Bus Plan that they can use to negotiate their way back onto the bus.

3. If the student continues to be a repeat offender they will be informed they have chosen to give up their bus privileges and will be issued a “Loss of Bus Privilege” form that they must take home to their parent or guardian. The parent must schedule a meeting with the Transportation Director in order for the student to be allowed to return to the bus (463-3116). Meeting times available are 8:30 am, 9:00 am, 2:00 pm, and 2:30 pm. Other arrangements can be made.

4. When misbehavior warrants a suspension, the building principal will be invited to the meeting.
G - Illness Policy

To get the most out of a good education it is important that your child comes to school every day that school is in session. We all want your child to have the best opportunity to learn but we recognize there may be times when your child may not be able to attend because of illness. Parents and/or guardians will withhold students from boarding the bus when their student exhibits any of the following conditions related to their health:

1. Temporary Health Problems
   a. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
   b. High temperature
   c. Infection or contagious conditions (lice, chicken pox, pink eye, etc.)

2. An Extreme Emotional Condition
   a. Violent behaviors
   b. Screaming
   c. Hyperventilation
   d. Student has soiled himself/herself while waiting for the bus

H – Adaptive Equipment Policy

Alma Public Schools contracts with Dean Transportation for specialized transportation that requires adaptive equipment. Please check with them for their policy requirements and approvals that are needed before transportation service will be provided.
1. Q: Do preschoolers need to ride in a car seat?
   A: No, there is no regulation mandating children under 5 need to ride in a car seat. However, Department of Social Services guidelines require children under 5 to be transported in car seats if the Gross Vehicle Weight is less than 10,000 pounds.

2. Q: Is it the transportation staff’s responsibility to get the student to and from the home to the bus stop and bus door?
   A: No, it is the parent’s responsibility to get the student to the stop and to and from the bus door.

3. Q: What are the guidelines for taking students to the baby-sitter’s residence?
   A: See this handbook Page 1, #2. Pickup and delivery at a baby sitter’s location is determined by district policy.

4. Q: Do drivers need to transport students who are obviously ill?
   A: No, the parent will be contacted to transport their student to their home.

5. Q: Is there a maximum riding time for students?
   A: No, there is no limitation set up by the Michigan Department of Education nor is there a district policy setting maximum riding times for students. However, IEPC’s may speak to the riding time constraints due to medical problems.

6. Q: Do students need to ride in lap restraints or seat belts?
   A: No, there is no requirement for students to wear restraint or seat belts. The only seat required to have a seat belt is the driver’s seat which must be worn at all times the bus is in operation.

7. Q: Do drivers and monitors on specialized transportation vehicles need additional training?
   A: There are no guidelines that mandate training in specialized areas. However, all transportation employees are given specialized training in the areas of evacuations, CPR, choking, first aid, lifting procedures, EpiPen administration for bee stings, and behavioral plans. Other course are given periodically as determined by the management team.

8. Q: Does the Transportation Director have the right to be at an IEPC meeting where specialized transportation may be required?
   A: Yes, it is to the advantage of the district and parent or guardian to have the Transportation Director at an IEPC meeting where special transportation is going to be discussed and/or required.
ALMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ALTERNATE BUSING INFORMATION FORM
(Daycare Information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>Grade:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone: Home</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternate Pickup/Drop off Information (Responsible adult)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ALTERNATE BUSING**  Beginning Date:    Ending Date:    
If using Alternate Busing on a **REGULAR BASIS**, please complete the following:

Please check(✓) one (Home or Alternate):

In Morning To School From:  After School To:  

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Alternate</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If using Alternate Busing **OCCASIONALLY**, please check (✓) below.

Parent/Guardian will call the Transportation Office at 463-3116 when this transportation request is needed.

Please notify your child’s school of this alternate bus (babysitter) information.

Please sign ⇒ Parent/Guardian Signature

Return this form to: Alma Public Schools  Please allow 2 (two) working days to process this request. These requests need to be filled out every Attn: Transportation  school year and when you request a change. If this information is no longer valid, please call transportation and let us know as soon as possible.
1270 Bridge St  Thank you.
Alma, MI  48801

Or: return to your child’s school office.

If this form is not on file at the transportation office, your child will be transported to and from his/her home address or home bus stop only.

FAX No. (989) 463-2231  Write additional information on reverse side of form.

Revised 9/01
Student Responsibility Center Bus Referral

On this date, ___________________ __________________________, has chosen to:

☐ Go To Student Responsibility Center (SRC)
☐ Lose Bus Privileges

Please check which best describes the student’s first disruption.

☐ Physical Disruption ☐ Throwing Objects
☐ Verbal Disruption ☐ Refusal to Follow Driver’s Directions
☐ Visual Disruption

Was the RTP Questioning Process Used?   Yes ☐   No ☐

Please check which describes the student’s disruption today.

☐ Physical Disruption ☐ Throwing Objects
☐ Verbal Disruption ☐ Refusal to Follow Driver’s Directions
☐ Visual Disruption

Ask the Question: What will happen if you disrupt again?

Referring Person: _________________________ Bus Letter ____ Bus Number ____

Date: _______________ Time: ______________

Disruption:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
School Bus Discipline – Parent/Guardian Notification
The Responsible Thinking Process

Date: ____________________________   Bus #: ___________________ Driver: ____________________________

Student Name: ______________________________________________ School: ____________________________

Student’s violation of school bus rules: ____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Proper behavior will allow the student to gradually return to their assigned seat on the bus. If the student continues
to create hazards and distractions on the bus, the student will have chosen to leave the bus until an acceptable plan is
in place for proper behavior. **Parent/Guardian must sign and return this form to the bus driver before the
student will be allowed to ride the bus.**

School Bus Discipline – Parent/Guardian Notification
The Responsible Thinking Process

Date: ____________________________   Bus #: ___________________ Driver: ____________________________

Student Name: ______________________________________________ School: ____________________________

Student’s first violation of school bus rules: __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

The student has chosen to lose their bus privilege. Transportation is now the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
To resume the privilege of school transportation the student must create an acceptable behavior plan and then
negotiate their way back onto the bus at a meeting between the student, parent or guardian, bus driver and the
transportation director. Upon resuming their bus privilege the student will be assigned to a front seat. The student
may be allowed to gradually return to their assigned seat on the bus by demonstrating their willingness to follow
the bus rules while riding the bus. Please call the Transportation Office at (989) 463-3116 to set up a time for this
meeting to negotiate the student’s way back onto the bus.
Cell Phones and Electronic Communication Devices
Policy 5136 – Personal Communication Devices

Students may use personal communication devices (PCDs) before and after school, during their lunch break, in between classes as long as they do not create a distraction, disruption or otherwise interfere with the educational environment, during after school activities (e.g., extra-curricular activities) and/or at school-related functions. Use of PCDs, except those approved by a teacher or administrator, at any other time is prohibited and they must be powered completely off (i.e., not just placed into vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight.

For purposes of this policy, “personal communication device” includes computers, tablets (e.g., iPads and similar devices), electronic readers (“e-readers”; e.g., Kindles and similar devices), cell phones (e.g., mobile/cellular telephones, smartphones (e.g., BlackBerry, iPhone, Android devices, Windows Mobile devices, etc.), telephone paging devices (e.g., beepers or pagers), and/or other web-enabled devices of any type. Students may not use PCDs on school property or at a school-sponsored activity to access and/or view Internet web sites that are otherwise blocked to students at school. Students may use PCDs while riding on a school bus or Board-provided vehicle during school-sponsored activities, at the discretion of the bus driver, classroom teacher and/or sponsor/advisor/coach. Distracting behavior that creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated.

Also, during after school activities, PCDs shall be powered completely off (not just placed into vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight when directed by the administrator or sponsor.

Under certain circumstances, a student may keep his/her PCD “On” with prior approval from the building principal.

Except as authorized by a teacher, administrator or IEP team, students are prohibited from using PCDs during the school day, including while off-campus on a field trip, to capture, record and/or transmit the words or sounds (i.e., audio) and/or images (i.e., pictures/video) of any student, staff member or other person. Using a PCD to capture, record and/or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without proper consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted. Students who violate this provision and/or use a PCD to violate the privacy rights of another person shall have their PCD confiscated and held until a parent/guardian picks it up, and may be directed to delete the audio and/or picture/video file while the parent/guardian is present. If the violation involves potentially illegal activity the confiscated-PCD may be turned-over to law enforcement.

PCDs, including but not limited to those with cameras, may not be activated or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include, but are not limited to, classrooms, gymnasiums, locker rooms, shower facilities, rest/bathrooms, and any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The Superintendent and building principals are authorized to determine other specific locations and situations where use of a PCD is absolutely prohibited.

Students shall have no expectation of confidentiality with respect to their use of PCDs on school premises/property.

Students may not use a PCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. See Policy 5517.01 – Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior. In particular, students are prohibited from using PCDs to: (1) transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs; and (2) engage in “sexting” - i.e., sending, receiving, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are also prohibited from using a PCD to capture, record, and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using PCDs to receive such information.
Possession of a PCD by a student at school during school hours and/or during extra-curricular activities is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise abuses this privilege.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the PCD. The building principal will also refer the matter to law enforcement or child services if the violation involves an illegal activity (e.g., child pornography, sexting). Discipline will be imposed on an escalating scale ranging from a warning to an expulsion based on the number of previous violations and/or the nature of or circumstances surrounding a particular violation. If the PCD is confiscated, it will be released/returned to the student's parent/guardian after the student complies with any other disciplinary consequences that are imposed, unless the violation involves potentially illegal activity in which case the PCD may be turned-over to law enforcement. A confiscated device will be marked in a removable manner with the student's name and held in a secure location in the building's central office until it is retrieved by the parent/guardian or turned-over to law enforcement. School officials will not search or otherwise tamper with PCDs in District custody unless they reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of the law or other school rules. Any search will be conducted in accordance with Policy 5771 – Search and Seizure. If multiple offenses occur, a student may lose his/her privilege to bring a PCD to school for a designated length of time or on a permanent basis.

A person who discovers a student using a PCD in violation of this policy is required to report the violation to the building principal.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their PCDs. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or damage to, or misuse or unauthorized use of, PCDs brought onto its property.

Parents/Guardians are advised that the best way to get in touch with their child during the school day is by calling the school office.

Students may use school phones to contact parents/guardians during the school day.

Adopted 1/12/04
Revised 1/14/08
Revised 1/11/10
Revised 11/8/10
Revised 2/11/13
Plan for Weather Related School Closings and Delays

Under certain weather related conditions it may be necessary to delay the start of school or close them all together. This decision is made by the Superintendent who works in collaboration with the Director of Transportation to determine if school should be delayed or cancelled for safety reasons due to inclement weather.

The process used to make this decision involves a collaboration between the area superintendents and transportation directors. As the transportation directors collaboratively review weather and road conditions the area superintendents analyze the effect that closing one or all of the area schools will have on each district. Careful consideration is also given to the impact that staying open in marginal weather will have on the safety of the district’s student population and public at large.

Making a decision to delay or close school is not always an easy decision to make. Fog in the early morning can be completely gone by the time school starts and a clear visibility can quickly turn into a dense fog in just minutes. Likewise rain at 6 a.m. can quickly turn to ice or form an accumulation of snow in minutes. Having several directors and superintendents involved in the decision-making process works in a positive manner for all districts in the Gratiot Isabella Regional Education Service District.

Needless to say fog is the most difficult weather condition that we deal with on a day-to-day basis. It is unpredictable. There have been times when a dense fog has settled in after busses have already been dispatched. When this happens, we have no choice but to instruct our drivers to be careful and proceed with extreme caution. The general public needs to be aware of this and travel with extreme caution on foggy days.

If weather conditions deteriorate during the school day, the transportation director will monitor both current and forecasted weather conditions and keep the superintendent appraised. By doing so early dismissal or cancellation of evening events can be made in a timely manner.

Decisions made regarding school delays or closings are always made by the superintendent with student and public safety in mind.