

Louisiana Believes

Charter School Performance Compact: School Bus Safety

Charter school boards may be required by their authorizer to provide free transportation for any student within the jurisdictional boundaries of the local board if the student resides more than one mile from such school.

Boards wishing to implement their own transportation system instead of contracting with a bus operator should refer to Bulletin 119 – Louisiana Transportation Specifications and Procedures, for bus and employee requirements.

Exemptions: Type 2 charter schools not providing transportation and schools wishing to reimburse students for transportation (i.e. issuing tokens for public transportation)

Bus Safety Requirements

Warning Signals	Amber and red flashing warning signals must be used for student loading and unloading.
Location	Buses must stop in the right traffic lane on a non-intersection part of the street.
Opening of Doors	Drivers must ascertain that traffic has stopped and then open the door for entrance or exit of students.
Railroad Crossings	Buses should stop no closer than 15 feet in front of the rail and open the service door to listen and look for approaching engines, trains, or train cars.
Maximum Bus Speeds	55 mph on highways, 35 mph on streets
Cell Phone Usage	No driver shall use a cell phone while driving a school bus except in emergency situations.
Bus Capacity	The number of students per bus should not exceed the bus manufacturer's capacity limit.
Emergency Exits	Aisles must be clear and doors and emergency exists must remain unobstructed at all times.
Student Behavior	Students should remain seated with hands, arms, and heads inside the bus at all times, unless in emergency situations or when the bus is at a complete stop.
Students with IEPs	Must provide school bus service for students with disabilities as indicated in the student's IEP. The IEP may specify "curb-to-curb" or "door-to-door" services. It may also require a bus attendant.

Bus Safety Best Practices

While not required by statute, schools should implement a transportation policy that includes:

- Student bus behavior expectations that align with the school's class behavior expectation
- Procedures for handling students whose parent is not at the bus stop
- Clearly communicated bus stop locations and times with parents and students
- Procedure for allowing parents and students to notify the school of bus issues
- Bus driver behavior expectations
- Communication procedures between the bus operator, the school, and parents in the event of an emergency situation

Additional Information

ADA Resource	Website
Bulletin 119 – Louisiana Transportation Specifications and Procedures	http://doe.louisiana.gov/bese/policies.html
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	http://www.nhtsa.gov/School-Buses
American School Bus Council	http://www.schoolbusfacts.com/

This informational document is a general guide to inform schools of basic requirements. It is NOT a substitute for federal, state guidelines and/or the appropriate state and local policies. Please visit the websites above for more information or contact the Office of Portfolio with questions.