

School Bus Driver Policy

Purpose:

To provide clear communication regarding the relevant components of the Bus Safety Act 2009 (Vic) and Bus Safety Regulations 2010 (Vic) that apply to the school. To ensure the appropriate controls are in place to reduce risks to safety so far as reasonably practicable.

Scope:

All persons driving the bus for and on behalf of Koonwarra Village School.

Implemented by:

Principal

Approved by:

KVS Board

Communicated via:

Staff induction, staff handbook, parent handbook, website, whole school training plan.

Reviewed:

Every three years or as legislative changes arise or improvements are identified.

Definitions

School Bus is any bus utilised by the school for school purposes.

Bus Driver is any person driving a School Bus for the purpose of transporting students or equipment for school purposes.

Bus Safety Worker means a person who has carried out, is carrying out or is about to carry out, bus safety work including a person who is employed or engaged by a bus operator to carry out bus safety work or engaged by any other person to carry out bus safety work on behalf of the school.

Bus Safety Work means an activity that may affect the safety of bus services, including driving a bus, monitoring, repairing, testing or maintaining a bus or safety equipment in or on a bus, setting or altering a schedule or timetable for the bus service.

Prescribed Incidents is a group of definitions defined in the Bus Safety Regulations 2020 (Vic) that outline which types of safety related incidents need to be reported and based on the category the timeline in which they are to be reported.

Overview

Koonwarra Village School (KVS) utilises buses for transporting students to and from locations outside the school for Out 'n' About events, Camps and Excursions. An optional, limited bus service is also provided for the transport of students to and from school on a non-commercial basis, with a nominal fee charged for cost recovery purposes.

KVS is committed to continuous improvement in bus safety management, and as an Accredited Bus Operator, is required to comply with all relevant components of the Bus Safety Act 2009 (Vic) and Bus Safety Regulations 2010 (Vic). This policy outlines the ways in which KVS will operate its bus service in line with these statutory requirements.

KVS is committed to a zero tolerance alcohol and illicit drugs working environment and will take steps so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure that all persons driving the bus have a zero level of alcohol and illicit drugs immediately prior, while driving the bus, or performing any Bus Safety Work and are not impaired by other drugs or medication.

The school will take a non-punitive approach to any staff member who advise that they do not feel capable of operating a bus service.

Responsibilities

Various positions within the school have duties and responsibilities within the operation of the school bus service. See Schedule A for specific duties and responsibilities for Bus Drivers (including any staff who may drive the bus), Administration, and the Principal.

The Principal is the designated Bus Operator, and the School Board has a responsibility to ensure that the Bus Operator actively manages the risks arising from those operations and maintains an awareness of the effectiveness and level of compliance with this policy. One of the ways this will be achieved is through an annual internal audit completed by the Principal, and reported on to the Board.

Requirements & Implementation

The school is required to have in place a Management Information System (MIS) and a Maintenance Management System (MMS). These systems include all required activities and tasks relating to maintaining current accreditation as a bus operator. The Principal is responsible for implementing the MIS and MMS.

The school will ensure that all employees, volunteers or contractors who undertake Bus Safety Work are provided with a list of responsibilities as per Schedule A, are trained in the Bus Accident & Emergency Procedure and feel confident to undertake Bus Safety Work.

Safety Issues & Defect Reporting

All employees, volunteers or contractors who undertake Bus Safety Work are responsible for being alert to, and reporting any Safety Issues. Safety issues should be reported to the Principal as soon as reasonably practical to do so. In some instances, photos and detailed information may need to accompany the report. All minor safety issues and defects should be reported via email to the Principal at admin@koonwarravillageschool.org and all major safety issues or defects should be reported immediately to the Principal via phone or in-person. The Principal is responsible for preventing use of the bus until such time as the major safety issue or defect is rectified or the vehicle has been physically inspected and determined to be in safe working order.

Related Documentation

- Bus Safety Act 2009 (Vic)
- Bus Safety Regulations 2010 (Vic)
- Vehicle Standards Information – VicRoads
- Vehicle manufacturer specifications and manuals – Available online from manufacturers
- Bus Vehicle Register
- Bus Driver Register
- Bus Safety Victoria Incident Reporting <https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/bus-safety/safety-duties/how-to-report-a-bus-incident>
- Bus Accident & Emergency Procedure
- School Bus Management Information System (MIS)
- School Bus Maintenance Management System (MMS)
- Fitness to Drive Standards <https://austroads.com.au/drivers-and-vehicles/assessing-fitness-to-drive>

Related Policies

- Emergency Management Plan

Schedule A – Responsibilities (Bus Safety Work Acknowledgement)

The responsibilities outlined below will be provided to relevant staff members in the form of a Bus Safety Work Acknowledgement. Staff must sign that they have read, understood and will comply with all stated responsibilities, prior to performing any relevant duties. The signed copy will be placed in their personnel file.

Bus Driver Responsibilities (all staff who drive the school bus)

It is the responsibility of every person when reporting for duty or while at work to ensure they:

- have no drugs or alcohol present in their blood or breath immediately before, or while driving the bus
- are not impaired by drugs or medication(s) immediately before, or while driving the bus, including any medications that cause drowsiness
- inform their treating health practitioner or pharmacist of this policy and obligations when being prescribed medications
- have a current and valid Drivers Licence
- are confident driving a bus
- comply with all relevant road laws and drive to the conditions and in line with any identified hazards or risks
- comply with any guidelines, processes, procedures or policies with regards to the school bus service
- notify the Principal immediately if any circumstances arise that would affect your suitability to perform Bus Safety Work.
- are aware of any hazards and risks relevant to the journey they are undertaking and have adequate risk management strategies in place.
- conduct a pre-trip inspection for the first passenger carrying trip on each operating day
- follow the Bus Emergency Response Plan in the event of an incident or emergency
- are alert to, and report any Safety Issues or defects to the Principal as soon as reasonably practical to do so.
- utilise the latest to-and-from school bus timetable and bus stop locations.
- do not allow a student to leave the bus stop in the afternoon without parent supervision unless there is parent permission provided in writing and recorded on the bus schedule.
- do not drive the bus if suffering from fatigue or feeling drowsy.
- advise the Principal and not drive the bus if employee is experiencing or diagnosed with any of the below (as per the Fitness to Drive Standards) until medical clearance is in place:
 - Blackouts
 - Cardiovascular conditions
 - Diabetes
 - Dementia and cognitive impairment
 - Seizures and epilepsy
 - Other neurological conditions
 - Musculoskeletal conditions
 - Psychiatric conditions
 - Sleep disorders
 - Alcohol and other substance misuse
 - Vision and eye disorders

- Treatments that have either a short- or long-term impact on any of the functional pre-requisites listed above.

Bus Administrator Responsibilities (Administration)

School administration will:

- Maintain a register of everyone who drives the school bus.
- Set, update and communicate the schedule of the optional before and after school bus service to bus drivers and families.
- Ensure families understand the schedule, process and timetable and have provided current family phone numbers and emergency contacts in the event of an emergency during bus operation.
- Issue family invoices for students who utilise the optional before and after school bus service.
- Request parent permission for students to leave the bus stop and walk home unaccompanied, and note permission status for each student on the schedule and timetable.
- Monitor due dates and book in the Annual Safety Inspection and the required Vehicle Safety Inspections, ensuring that the providers used are suitably qualified and competent. Log details in the Bus Vehicle Register once complete.
- Retain the below records for three years:
 - The name, address and driver licence number of each person who drives a bus operated by the accredited bus operator
 - Any documents used to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of accreditation
 - Any document produced as part of the Management Information System (MIS) or Maintenance Management System (MMS)
 - Any document produced as part of the annual internal audit
 - Evidence of annual bus inspections and vehicle safety inspections
- Issue, track and file the signing of all Bus Safety work acknowledgement of duties forms.
- Ensure there is a current Bus Emergency Response Plan in all school buses and other buses used by the school.
- Monitor reported Safety Issues and defects and alert the Principal in a reasonable timeframe based on the type of safety issue or defect.
- Schedule fire Extinguisher safety checks every 6 months and log the details in the Fire Safety Equipment Register.

Bus Operator Responsibilities (Principal)

The Principal will:

- Ensure that relevant safety information is provided to external individuals and entities performing maintenance and repairs on the school buses for the school.
- Ensure everyone performing Bus Safety Work have read and understood their specific duties, this policy and any other related guidelines or instructions, and will comply with all relevant aspects of this policy.

- Ensure the school remains compliant with relevant aspects of being an Accredited Bus Operator.
- Conduct an annual hazard and risk assessment of the bus service and report relevant outcomes to the School Board.
- Ensure that there is suitable investigation into the safety of before and after school bus stop locations.
- Ensure that the Safety Director at Bus Safety Victoria is notified of prescribed incidents as per Bus Safety Victoria guidelines.
- Take action on any reported safety issues as soon as reasonably practical to do so, and if necessary, remove a bus from service until safe operation can resume.
- Implement the MIS and MMS and in doing so ensure that all those that have a role within the MMS are suitably qualified and competent
- Undertake an annual audit of the MIS and MMS, reporting the audit outcomes to the Board.
- Report to the board at each meeting of any relevant bus activities, such as changes to the risk register, training, staff concerns or updates, vehicle concerns and/or defects and inspections or maintenance.
- Ensure that all prescribed and specified maintenance activities are completed.

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Position: _____ **Date:** _____