

Van Buren School District  
School Bus Safety Plan

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## **Van Buren School District**

### **School Bus Safety Plan**

#### **Plan Authorization**

The Van Buren School District recognizes the importance of the development of a School Bus Safety Plan. The district is responsible for the transportation of over 3,000 students to and from school each day. Along the way we may come across hazards that change from day to day and need a plan to address these hazards when they occur. By planning ahead, we will try to prevent any accident that could affect our students and drivers.

#### **Statutory Authority**

As instructed by Act 1206 of 2009, 27-51-1004 and 27-51-1005, our Superintendent and Transportation Director will work in conjunction with the Arkansas State Police, Crawford County Sheriff's Department, Van Buren Police Department, and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office to develop a School Bus Safety Plan designed to ensure the safety of the children being loaded or unloaded from school buses.

#### **Applicable Participants**

The Van Buren School District's plan will involve many different agencies. It will begin at the school with our drivers, the transportation director, the principals, and the superintendent. The district will require and desire assistance from many outside agencies to make our transportation routes as safe as possible. The district will work with the county judge and county road department to keep trees cut and obstructions out of the way at intersections and blind curves. The district will ask the Arkansas State Police, Van Buren Police Department, and the Crawford County Sheriff's office to help patrol and issue tickets to motorists who fail to follow the law when it comes to passing stopped school buses. And lastly, the district will call on our local deputy prosecuting attorney to prosecute those motorists who fail to abide by the school bus safety laws.

#### **Initial Plan and Updates**

Initially, our plan will call for our bus drivers to make our transportation director aware of any safety issues they observe while driving their bus routes. The transportation director will check into these issues and see what steps need to be taken to remove the safety threat from the routes. If the route can be changed, the transportation director will make these necessary changes. If a change in the route doesn't help, the transportation director will notify the proper

agency to help alleviate the safety problem. Review of the plan will be constant. As people move in and out of our district, school bus routes frequently change. Any time that the driver changes his/her route and feels that there is a safety hazard, he/she will be required to go to the transportation director. An annual meeting will be held at the beginning of each school year to go over the routes and safety issues.

### **School District Responsibilities**

The Van Buren School District assumes much of the responsibility of making sure that our students safely arrive at school and return home each day. To ensure this safety, the district will perform a comprehensive route analysis at the beginning of each school year. The transportation director will periodically review the routes to ensure safety. All drivers are trained annually with three hours of bus driving safety. A plan will be implemented for how drivers are to handle changes in transportation routes. The VBSD will also meet with local law enforcement agencies, prosecuting authorities, and public works departments of the state and local government to discuss safety concerns for our bus routes.

### **Route Analysis**

Before school starts each year, the transportation director will confer with bus drivers and survey all bus routes. This survey is an attempt to identify those road conditions that may be a hazard to bus operations. Included in this survey will be bus stop locations, and will take into account recommendations from the "Identification and Evaluation of School Bus Route and Hazard Marking Systems" produced by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. This report is included as an addendum to this safety plan.

### **Periodic Reviews**

Bus routes are subject to change almost daily. Therefore, bus drivers will constantly review their routes for any hazards that may arise due to these changes. If the driver confronts a hazard, he/she shall notify the transportation director of the hazard. The transportation director will investigate the hazard and take the necessary measures to remove the hazard. It is here that the city and county governments will help. It may be that a tree needs trimmed or a gravel road graded or a road floods when it rains. The VBSD is committed to do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of its students.

### **School District Training**

Each August, bus drivers will receive three hours of training in school bus safety. This training includes all procedures for loading and unloading, laws, train track safety, and their responsibility to report any and all motorists who violate the provision of Arkansas Code

Annotated 27-51-1004 or 27-51-1005. Students will be given procedures at the beginning of the school year on how to load and unload the bus, how to act while on the bus, and the rules and consequences for violating these procedures.

### **Route Updates**

It is occasionally necessary to make changes to bus routes. When this takes place, it will be the responsibility of the transportation director to notify local authorities. The VBSD will annually coordinate with local law enforcement agencies on current routes and hazards to those routes and stops that are beyond the control of the school district to correct.

### **School District Discussion with Local Officials**

The transportation director and the safety coordinator will meet periodically with local law enforcement agencies, prosecuting authorities, and public works departments of state and local governments regarding procedures to implement, improve, and ensure the safety of students loading and unloading school buses. These discussions shall include the appropriate procedures for a person who observes an operator of a motor vehicle violating 27-51-1004 or 27-51-1005 to the appropriate jurisdictions. These meetings should also include the possibility of additional signage, traffic markings or electronic traffic control devices.

### **Local Law Enforcement Agency Responsibilities**

In order for the bus routes to be as safe as possible, the VBSD needs the assistance of outside agencies. The district needs the local police and county sheriff's departments to help patrol the routes and to be aware of route locations. County road crews are needed to help keep the roads safe and the areas around the road need to be clear of obstructions. Our transportation director will meet annually with law enforcement agencies to ensure all parties have a detailed map of current bus routes.

### **Law Enforcement Compliance Guidance**

The school district seeks the assistance of local law enforcement to be continually informed of the latest state laws regarding motor vehicle operations. When there are changes to the city, county, or state law pertaining to motor vehicle operation, the district requests that notification of the appropriate agency be given to the superintendent or the transportation director.

### **Route Analysis**

No agency better understands the safety of the roadways than local and county law enforcement agencies. It is imperative that local and county law enforcement agencies analyze

district bus safety plans, bus routing, and pickup and discharge stops. Local law enforcement agencies can offer suggestions and recommendations regarding safety and assist in routing buses around safety hazards.

### **Route Marking**

Local law enforcement agencies can assist the VBSD in maintaining road safety. Weather conditions frequently have a negative impact on the safety of roads. Law enforcement agencies can notify the district of road hazards and assist in the placement of road markings.

### **Law Enforcement Training**

Local law enforcement agencies may seek training that they feel will help them to assist the district in making the roadways as safe as possible for our school buses. The district requests that local law enforcement agencies keep the transportation department informed of any new transportation laws. The district further requests that law enforcement look for motorists who are not observing the laws around school buses and their routes.

## **Final Agreement**

### **VBSD Commitments**

The VBSD commits to follow through with this plan. The school will require ongoing training for bus drivers, and cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, the prosecuting attorney, and other agencies to ensure that bus routes are as safe as possible. The district will constantly look for hazards along routes and monitor and adjust those routes as needed. This plan goes into effect immediately and our transportation director agrees to meet with local agencies each year before the start of the school year.

### **Local Official Commitments**

The county law enforcement agencies are committed to making our bus routes as safe as possible. They will meet with the school transportation director annually to review the routes and offer suggestions to improve the safety of the routes. The county road crews will work with school personnel to keep the roads cleared of hazards and free of obstructions. Local law enforcement is committed to prosecute those motorists who fail to follow the traffic laws regarding bus safety.

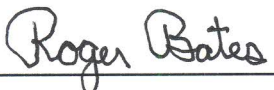
## Signatories

The following signatures signify a willingness to work together and make the bus routes of the VBSD as safe as possible. Through constant communication and monitoring by everyone involved, our students will be pick up and delivered home each day without any accidents.




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Dr. Merle Dickerson, Superintendent  
Van Buren School District




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Roger Bates, Transportation Director



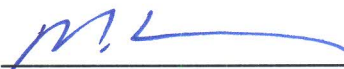
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Kenneth Bell, Police Chief, City of Van Buren



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Ron Brown, Sheriff of Crawford County



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Marc McCune, Prosecuting Attorney



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John Hall, Crawford County Judge