Instructions for Schools Using Charter Buses

These guidelines and instructions should be used by Gaston County School (GCS) personnel contracting with a Charter Bus Carrier. Only contractors that are on the "approved list of carriers" for GCS may be selected to perform field trips or to satisfy other school based transportation needs (i.e. athletic trips, etc.). Schools using contractors for transportation are responsible for the following:

1) Contracting with an approved carrier for the trip

- ✓ Contact and price carriers on the approved list.
- ✓ Once a carrier is selected request that a copy of the contract be sent to you for review well in advance of the trip. As a minimum, be sure that document addresses the following:

  - o Date of trip, # of passengers, # of buses, itinerary, total charge for the trip & total expected mileage. Name of carrier and name of your group.
  - o Details of how the cost is determined; are charges hourly, fixed, mileage based or other? Be sure to understand any special driver accommodations, gratuity or other costs. Trips booked using a travel agent may incur additional cost.
  - o Deposit and refund/cancellation policy; amount due at the time of reservation; when is final payment due?
  - o Weather postponement/cancellation costs.
  - o Any other costs? Taxes? Permits? Fees?
  - o Understand any miscellaneous policies that might affect the group (e.g. carry-on items or food/beverage)
  - o In case of emergency who should be contacted? (e.g. if the bus driver or vehicle is not acceptable, broken down, etc.)
  - o Keep in mind that any trip that will require 10 hours or more of driving WILL require 2 drivers and may require additional cost. How will the drivers rotate and will drivers comply with federal hours of service regulations? The contract should specify the number of drivers as well as the number of vehicles.
  - o The need for handicapped accessibility, storage capacity (i.e. band equipment), etc.

2) Confirming travel arrangements with the carrier prior to the day of the trip

- ✓ Review the terms of the contract.
- ✓ Call the carrier to confirm reservations and details of the trip.
- ✓ Copy the contract and emergency contact information; have one (1) copy ready for each bus that will be used for the trip.

3) Day of the trip / Departure Checklist

- ✓ Provide a copy of the contract and emergency contact #'s to chaperones for each bus.
- ✓ Complete the <u>Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist For School Personnel</u>.
- ✓ Ensure that the completed <u>Charter Bus Pre-trip Checklist For School Personnel</u> and the <u>Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist for Charter Bus Drivers</u> is on file at the school office before departure.
- ✓ Validate that the bus company contracted for the trip is using buses from that company. If the buses being used for the trip are from a subcontractor, be sure that the subcontractor appears on the list of approved carriers. If a company being used for the trip does not appear on the approved list of carriers, that bus and company MAY NOT be used for the trip!!
- ✓ **If any items on the pre-trip inspection are unsatisfactory, the bus must not be used until the items are corrected!**

4) Upon completion of the trip

- ✓ Settle remaining financial matters with the carrier.
- ✓ Notify Transportation Department (704.866.6180) of any complications incurred with the carrier.

Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist
<u>For School Personnel</u>

<u>School Administrator/Employee Responsibilities</u>

_____ Upon Charter Bus arrival, verify the Carrier that arrives is the Carrier contracted for the trip; if not, the Carrier providing the bus(es) must be on the Gaston County Schools approved list of Carriers.

_____ Confirm that the proper number of buses and drivers are present, as stipulated in the contract for the trip.

_____ Complete the following information (one (1) checklist per bus):

Name of Driver: _____

Destination: _____   Dates of Trip: _____

School Name: _____   Type of Trip: _____

Carrier Name: _____   Bus #:   _____

Departure Time: _____   Return Time: _____

No. of Students: _____

Name of Chaperones: _____

_____ Ask the bus driver to complete the <u>Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist For Charter Bus Drivers</u>; (Driver must sign the checklist). Note that a separate form is required for each bus!

_____ Deliver this form and the form signed by the driver(s) to the School office prior to departure. If trip departs before office is open, leave forms in designated location.

Name of School Employee(s) responsible for Trip: _____

_____

By signing below, I acknowledge that the <u>Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist For School Personnel</u> has been followed:

_____   _____   _____
Printed   Signature   Date

Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist
For Charter Bus Drivers

<u>Driver Responsibilities</u>

_____ Driver has a valid Commercial Drivers License with passenger endorsement, valid Medical Certificate (Pocket Card), and Duty Status Record (log book).

_____ Ensure that a current certificate of insurance, vehicle registration card and DOT safety inspection are on the bus at all times.

_____ Explain emergency procedures and safety regulations to bus riders prior to departure.

_____ Conduct Pre-Trip inspection procedures for <u>EACH</u> vehicle prior to each trip as follows:

- ✓ Check Vehicle number and expiration date on DOT inspection
- ✓ Copy of vehicle Pre-Trip is available and executed (driver required to complete pre-trip inspection prior to trip arrival)
- ✓ Check tires and treads (no recaps on front tires; no slick tires!)
- ✓ Check wheel hubs for grease leaks
- ✓ Check all mirrors for visibility
- ✓ Look for any fluid leaks, including a check of the fuel tank cover
- ✓ Validate that the bus is registered to operate in the states it will be traveling
- ✓ Check all Lights (interior, head, tail and brake)
- ✓ Check emergency doors, roof hatches, windows and exit handles
- ✓ Check first aid kit, fire extinguisher and reflectors
- ✓ Check driver's seat belt; rider seat belts must be securely fastened to the bus
- ✓ Check handrails and handholds
- ✓ Ensure spare fuses are on board unless bus is equipped with circuit breaker
- ✓ Test horn and windshield wipers
- ✓ Check windshield and windows for cracks
- ✓ Test emergency brakes and foot brake; check for air leaks
- ✓ Check two-way communication capability
- ✓ Check and confirm route of trip
- ✓ Ensure that log book is visible

_____ Deliver the signed <u>Charter Bus Pre-Trip Checklist For Charter Bus Drivers</u> to appropriate school personnel prior to departure.

I certify by signing below, that I have completed all required pre-trip inspection procedures prior to the assigned trip and that the items inspected are free of any defects. I agree to operate the vehicle according to laws and regulations (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations), including but not limited to the provisions governing hours of service availability.

_____   _____   _____
Driver's Name (Printed)   Driver's Signature   Date