



## **SCHOOL BUS IDLING POLICY**

### ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY IDLING

#### **I. Morning Delivery in school loading/unloading zones – NO IDLING ZONE**

- A. Drivers should cut off engine ASAP
  - i. Lift bus drivers may need to leave the engine running if loading or unloading a wheel chair
  - ii. Special needs bus drivers may need to idle for heat or air conditioning to accommodate a medically fragile student
- B. Driver should not start engine again until a check for students and belongings is completed and driver is ready and it is clear to depart (keep radio on for communication)

#### **II. Afternoon Pick-Up in school loading/unloading zones – NO IDLING ZONE**

- A. Drivers should cut off engine ASAP (keep radio on for communication)
  - i. If this is driver's 2nd load then be sure to check for students and belongings upon arrival
- B. If the school is designed for angle parking, then utilization in the afternoon will place the exhaust further away from student walk paths and the school
- C. In cold weather the school may permit drivers to enter the school and go to a designated location to stay warm
  - i. Remember to respect the educational environment
- D. OR in cold weather drivers may congregate on one bus (for health and safety) and keep only one engine running while waiting for P.M. dismissal
  - i. If drivers gather on one bus be sure the bus is well away from the school and any school building air intakes
- E. Drivers **MUST** ensure that they are back on their bus prior to dismissal
- F. Driver should not start engine again until driver is ready and it is clear to depart

#### **III. Field & Athletic Trip destinations – NO IDLING ZONE**

- A. Drivers should not idle while waiting for students during field or athletic trips
  - i. Exception would be for driver/student health and safety under extreme temperature conditions (see #5, "Exceptions", item "c")
    - a. Minimize idling under these conditions and move the bus to a position well away from the school/building where possible
      - i. When idling is required to warm or cool the bus if the driver is required to stay with the bus for security reasons
      - ii. When idling is required to warm or cool the bus prior to departure



#### IV. Pre-Trip Inspection

- A. Drivers should keep idling to a minimum
  - i. Limit to the time required for inspecting the bus and the equipment on the bus
    - a. No more than 8 to 10 minutes (see #5, "Exceptions", item "c")
  - ii. Drivers should not routinely start and unnecessarily leave the bus running

#### V. Exceptions – Provided all reasonable steps are taken to minimize idling, the following exceptions apply:

- A. Idling is sometimes required in freezing weather
  - i. For deicing the windshield
  - ii. Or to thaw air brake lines
- B. Idling may be necessary for passenger and driver health and safety
  - i. If the outside temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below, then idling MAY be required for adequate heat
  - ii. If the outside temperature is 75 degrees Fahrenheit or more, and the climate inside the bus is unsafe, then idling COULD be required for adequate cooling (not to be abused).
    - a. BUT the lowering of windows and other measures to minimize or eliminate idling at these warm weather temperatures is highly desired (preferred method)
  - iii. Recommend that idling take place outside the school zone in the afternoon (where possible) if there is a requirement to maintain a safe and healthy temperature
    - a. In this case you would enter the school zone just prior to dismissal and shut off the engine
- C. Extended idling may also be required for cold weather fleet start-up
  - i. If the outside temperature is 20 Fahrenheit degrees or below

Georgia's 18,000 school bus driver's actions to eliminate unnecessary idling can make a significant impact. Collectively, they can make a huge difference in creating a healthier and cleaner environment and in protecting THEIR health and the health of THEIR STUDENTS.

**Remember – under all conditions, including the exceptions noted, eliminate any unnecessary idling.**