

**NEW MEXICO SCHOOL for the BLIND and VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

**TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK**

**2016 edition**

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# TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

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# TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK    SECTION I

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Transportation services are provided to all NMSBVI students for trips to/from home (daily and weekend), educational field trips, shuttle to/from public schools, and recreational activities.

The NMSBVI Transportation Handbook has been developed to adopt and establish policies for the safe and efficient operation of all student transportation. This document is for the purpose of providing school officials, transportation drivers/aides, students and parents with rules and operating procedures for student transportation.

All persons involved with student transportation should be familiar with all sections of this manual. Students are expected to follow guidelines as outlined on pages 15-16.

NMSBVI follows guidelines established by the NM State Department of Education entitled “Standards for Providing Transportation for Eligible Students” Regulation and Compliance Manual and the State Transportation Motor Pool Vehicle Regulations.

While this handbook may not cover all situations that exist for the various instances, it does provide guidelines to assist in the operation of special education transportation programs.

## TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK    SECTION II

### DEFINITIONS

#### 2.1 DESIGNATED VEHICLES

School vehicles which may be used to transport NMSBVI students shall include school buses as well as non-bus vehicles designed to carry nine or fewer occupants, including the driver. Vehicles included within this category are four to six passenger mini-compact cars; intermediate or full-size sedans; six to nine passenger station wagons; and six to nine passenger suburban-type vehicles built on a truck chassis, including pick-up trucks. Use of private vehicles in transporting students is prohibited.

Any exception to the above will require special permission. Students will not be allowed to ride on motorcycles. No student will be allowed to have or store any type of vehicle, except bicycles, on the school campus.

#### 2.2 LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

All staff driving non-bus school vehicles are required to possess a valid New Mexico Class D driver's license.

NMSBVI staff hired as bus drivers are required to have either a valid New Mexico Class C (under 26,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight) or Class B (over 26,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight) rating driver's license with school bus and passenger bus endorsements.

#### 2.3 DEFENSIVE DRIVING COURSE

All NMSBVI staff must complete the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course at the first available time as offered by the Human Resources office. The defensive driving courses have proven to be effective in providing staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to be safer drivers.

#### 2.4 INSPECTION OF VEHICLES

All staff are responsible for completing a checklist on the condition of the vehicle when departing from and returning to the campus. All vehicle problems or concerns should be reported to the transportation/fleet supervisor immediately. All trash and personal items must be removed from the vehicle before returning it to the fleet. Smoking in school vehicles is prohibited.

#### 2.5 FIRE EXTINGUISHER

All school transportation vehicles shall be equipped with a dry-chemical fire extinguisher and a first aid kit. All transportation drivers and aides shall be

knowledgeable in the use of all elements in the first aid kit and be familiar with operating the fire extinguisher in case of fire. In addition, staff and students will be required to attend one (1) bus evacuation training session per year.

## 2.6 SEAT BELTS AND OTHER RESTRAINTS

All occupants of school vehicles' (other than school buses) shall wear seat belts at all times. Most school buses are not equipped with seat belts. Use of seat belt restraints is mandatory and required by law in the State of New Mexico.

## 2.7 CHILD SAFETY SEATS AND BOOSTER SEATS

All students of NMSBVI are evaluated for use of child safety/booster seats. Child safety/booster seats are provided by the school for travel in school vehicles. Students are evaluated for safe and comfortable travel using the following checklist:

- A child age 1 through 4 must ride in a child safety seat.
- A child under 40 pounds must ride in a child safety seat.
- A child age 5 or 6 must ride in a child safety seat or booster seat.
- A child under 60 pounds must ride in a child safety seat or booster seat, regardless of age.
- A child age 7 through 12 must be properly restrained in a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt.
- A child age 13 through 17 must ride in a seat belt.

And by answering the following questions to ride without a booster seat:

- Does the child sit all the way back against the vehicle seat?
- Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat?
- Is the lap belt below the tummy, touching the thighs?
- Is the shoulder belt centered on the shoulder and chest?
- Can the child stay seated like this for the entire trip?

If the answer to any one of these questions is "no", the student must continue to travel in a booster seat.

## 2.8 SPEED LIMITS

Speed limits are strictly enforced. All school vehicles shall be driven at a speed not to exceed posted speed limits on state, U.S. highways, interstates, roads, and within city or village limits. Weather, road, traffic and light conditions may require that the vehicle be driven at a slower rate of speed to insure adequate safety.

## 2.9 FUEL CREDIT CARDS

Fuel credit cards are provided for the purchase of gasoline and/or motor oil. All school vehicles are serviced prior to leaving the campus; however, due to length of travel, there will be instances when refueling will be required. All credit card charge slips are to include the name of the driver as well as the bumper number of the vehicle being fueled.

## 2.10 WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather conditions throughout the state are monitored on weekend travel days by the transportation department. If inclement weather prohibits students from traveling home, students will remain on campus for the weekend and parents will be notified immediately. If inclement weather prohibits students from returning to school on the scheduled date, parents will be notified and travel arrangements will be made for the next available date that weather permits.

## 2.11 VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

All accidents involving a school vehicle must be reported immediately to the transportation/fleet supervisor as well as loss control coordinator. Specific instructions involving vehicle accidents are out-lined on page 19.

## 2.12 CELL PHONE USE

Cell phone use for calls or for texting is strictly prohibited while driving any vehicle operated by NMSBVI. During transportation of students, a school issued cell phone may be used for business purposes only by the caregiver on route. Use of school issued cell phones for personal reasons is prohibited. Use of personal cell phones while transporting students is also prohibited.

# TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK SECTION III

## WEEKEND TRANSPORTATION

Weekend travel consists of ground routes to selected destinations throughout the State of New Mexico.

Students will travel to their designated town/city every weekend from August to May with the exception of weekends outlined as “weekend on campus” in the current school calendar. An official, current school year transportation calendar is available from the transportation department.

School vehicles will depart from the NMSBVI residential campus on Fridays by 12:30 p.m. and will begin their return trip on Sundays (normal weekends) or designated weekday on holiday weekends from the first pick up location of a route as early as 12:00 p.m.

### 3.1 TRAVEL SUPPLIES

All routes will be provided with a travel packet supplied with a travel schedule, student information pertaining to the students on that particular route, a transportation calendar, a transportation handbook, gasoline credit cards, writing paper and pens, and a cellular phone. More information on the use of the cellular phones (page 12) and fuel credit cards (page 6) is available.

In addition to the above, all routes will be provided with a first aid kit and a travel bag containing bloodborne pathogen kits and cleaning supplies.

### 3.2 TRAVEL SCHEDULE

The weekly travel schedule will outline each travel route with information as follows:

- a) the driver's and aide's name traveling on each specific route;
- b) the town/city each specific route will travel to;
- c) the time of arrival/departure for each destination on each specific route;
- d) the exact location (address/landmark) of each destination;
- e) a complete list of all students traveling on each specific route sorted by town/city.

If for any reason a student will not be traveling on a particular weekend, a separate page defined as “Transportation Weekly Notes” will accompany the schedule and will define week-to-week travel changes.

A current travel schedule will be available on Thursday of each week outlining the travel arrangements for the following Friday. The only area on the schedule that may change weekly is the name of the driver and/or aide that will accompany the students on each particular route. The schedule will

be dated on the lower right hand corner to define the week.

### 3.3 STUDENT LIST

All students will be listed on the travel schedule by route. This list will not change unless a student is added/deleted from a route permanently. Before departure, the driver/aide must confirm that each student on their assigned route is on board. Any weekly student travel changes will be noted on the “Transportation Weekly Notes” accompanying each travel schedule.

### 3.4 TRANSPORTATION WEEKLY NOTES

This page will outline any student changes or special route instructions for the current weekend only--i.e., an alternate destination a student may be traveling to; a list of students staying on campus for a school activity; if a student is already home, etc.

A driver/aide should not knowingly permit a student to board/un-board the school vehicle at any point other than at the student’s regular assigned stop without the approval of the transportation department.

### 3.5 TRAVEL ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TIMES

All arrival and departure times are designed to accommodate the safest and shortest routes possible. Any changes to the arrival/departure times must be approved through the transportation department. Drivers/aides are not to change the arrival/departure times.

It is our goal to remain on schedule; however, if a vehicle is running more than fifteen (15) minutes late, the driver or aide should call the Transportation Manager to report any delays in the time of arrival for the succeeding stops. Concerned parents will call the Transportation Manager when a vehicle is not on time, and the manager will be able to communicate any delays.

If a parent/student is not at a stop on either travel day, the following steps must be taken:

- a) wait ten (10) minutes past the arrival/departure time;
- b) If the parent/student has not arrived, call the Transportation Manager for further instructions. Note: Parents are instructed to call the Transportation Manager if they are running late or if they are unable to meet the vehicle.

When a student is not riding on his/her usual route (as noted on the “Transportation Weekly Notes”), the vehicle may not be required to stop at the designated stop as outlined. This will allow the traveling vehicle extra time to arrive at the following destination point earlier. However, under no circumstances is a driver/aide permitted to call a parent to alert them of the earlier arrival. All vehicles must be at their designated stop at the designated time no matter how much time

is saved in between. Parents are given a schedule at the beginning of the school year specifying their child's exact time of arrival/departure and destination point.

### 3.6 RESTROOM STOPS

An extended, 15 minute restroom break is included on the longer trips to allow students' use of restroom facilities. Restroom use will not be permitted at every bus/vehicle stop; however, if necessary, a restroom stop will be permitted for an individual at the driver's/aide's discretion.

### 3.7 DRIVER'S/AIDE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Drivers/aides are responsible for the safety of all students and assurance of the orderly conduct and discipline of students on their assigned route.

Drivers/aides are required to report all serious discipline cases to the Transportation Manager and discipline group.

Drivers/aides shall not use alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, or legal substances which impair the ability to drive prior to or during duty hours. Smoking or possession of tobacco products is prohibited on school transportation and during any assigned rest stops while transporting students.

Drivers/aides shall supervise and assist with the loading and unloading of students on/off a school vehicle.

#### **Driver's are responsible for:**

- a) assuring that all medications, first aid kits, snacks/drinks (coolers) and travel packets are placed in the bus/vehicle before departure as well as returning them to the appropriate areas upon completion of the weekend;
- b) maintaining a student roster and taking roll to assure that all students are in the proper vehicle. Before departing, aides are required to check for any travel changes;
- c) assisting the travel aide with loading and unloading procedures at all assigned stops and determined restroom breaks.
- d) reporting, in writing, all faulty or improperly functioning equipment to the transportation supervisor as well as reporting all accidents in accordance with procedures outlined by the transportation department on pages 19-20;
- e) satisfactorily completing all required training programs as indicated by the transportation department;

### **Aide's are responsible for:**

- a) sitting in the middle seat of the suburbans AT ALL TIMES STUDENTS ARE BEING TRANSPORTED to provide assistance to students in the front & back seats.
- b) providing students assistance with seat belts, snacks and drinks, restroom breaks, etc.;
- c) assisting with short-term driving (as needed) at any time requested by the driver;
- d) staying awake to provide company to the driver during late night driving;
- e) assisting dormitory staff in returning students and bags to the appropriate dormitory upon arrival back to campus.

### **3.8 TRANSPORTING STUDENTS' MEDICATIONS**

In most cases, medications for students must be transported on weekends to their homes and returned with the student. All medications must be kept in a controlled area while traveling and delivered directly to the parent upon arrival.

Medications are issued by the health services staff in a bag with a list of students whose medications are being transported. Upon delivery of all the medications, the bag and label should be kept in the travel packet so the driver/aide on the return trip will know which students will need medications returned to NMSBVI.

If a parent/guardian returns the student without his/her medication, do not allow the parent to leave the student. It is important that students return back to NMSBVI with their medication. If this situation arises, please call the Transportation Manager to clarify the importance of the medication before allowing the parent to leave the student.

### **3.9 CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS**

The driver/aide shall report to the Transportation Manager any concerns or complaints which parents and/or students may have regarding weekend transportation.

Drivers/aides may make recommendations to the Transportation Manager for improvement of the school transportation program. All hazards, whether potential or existing, on each route and all causes for failure to operate on schedule should also be reported.

### 3.10 CELLULAR PHONES

Cellular phones are provided for each travel route. The cell phones are used strictly to communicate with NMSBVI staff concerning questions or problems that arise during the trip home. The cell phones are not to be used to call parents (for any reason).

Cell phone numbers are not to be given out to anyone including parents of students. All parents have been advised to call the Transportation Manager if they have questions or concerns. If deemed necessary, the Transportation Manager will communicate with the travel route regarding any concerns from the parents.

Emergencies: If an emergency situation should arise and the need to make a phone call is necessary, the driver/aide SHOULD NOT take the time to call the Transportation Manager first. However, at the first opportunity, the emergency should be reported to the Transportation Manager.

Cell phones are not to be used for personal communication. Each phone will have a detailed monthly statement that will show phone numbers that have called the cell phone or numbers that have been called from the cell phone.

The cell phones are logged and issued to each route, and it is the driver's/aide's responsibility to keep it secure. All misplaced or lost phones must be reported to the Transportation Manager immediately.

### 3.11 SNACKS/WATER

Snacks and water will be provided for all ground routes. Coolers will be packed with ice by the food service staff for the Friday departure trips, and ice for the return trips will be available in the break room.

Any adjustments to the amounts of snacks/water must be handled through the transportation department.

### 3.12 FEEDER ROUTE REIMBURSEMENT

When school transportation to a particular home town is not possible because of distance, road conditions, or sparseness of population, parents are reimbursed for mileage driven in route to meet the closest scheduled NMSBVI destination. Reimbursement is at the rate of \$.44 per mile (one-way) per day. Parents, whose child attends the residential campus and who drive more than ten (10) miles, one-way, to the nearest drop off/pick up point, will qualify for reimbursement.

Feeder route verifications will be mailed the first week of the following month for parent's verification and signature. Payment will follow, by mail, when verifications with parent's signatures are returned to NMSBVI.

## TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK SECTION IV

### DAILY TRANSPORTATION

Students who live in Alamogordo and the surrounding areas and who reside at home will be transported to/from school Monday through Friday.

The school bus will begin its daily morning run as early as 6:15 a.m. in time to meet the bell schedule. The afternoon run will begin immediately after the school day ends.

If a student will not be attending school on a particular day, parents are asked to call the school or Transportation Manager at the earliest time possible to report the absence. In turn, the school/Transportation Manager will communicate the message to the route driver/caregiver.

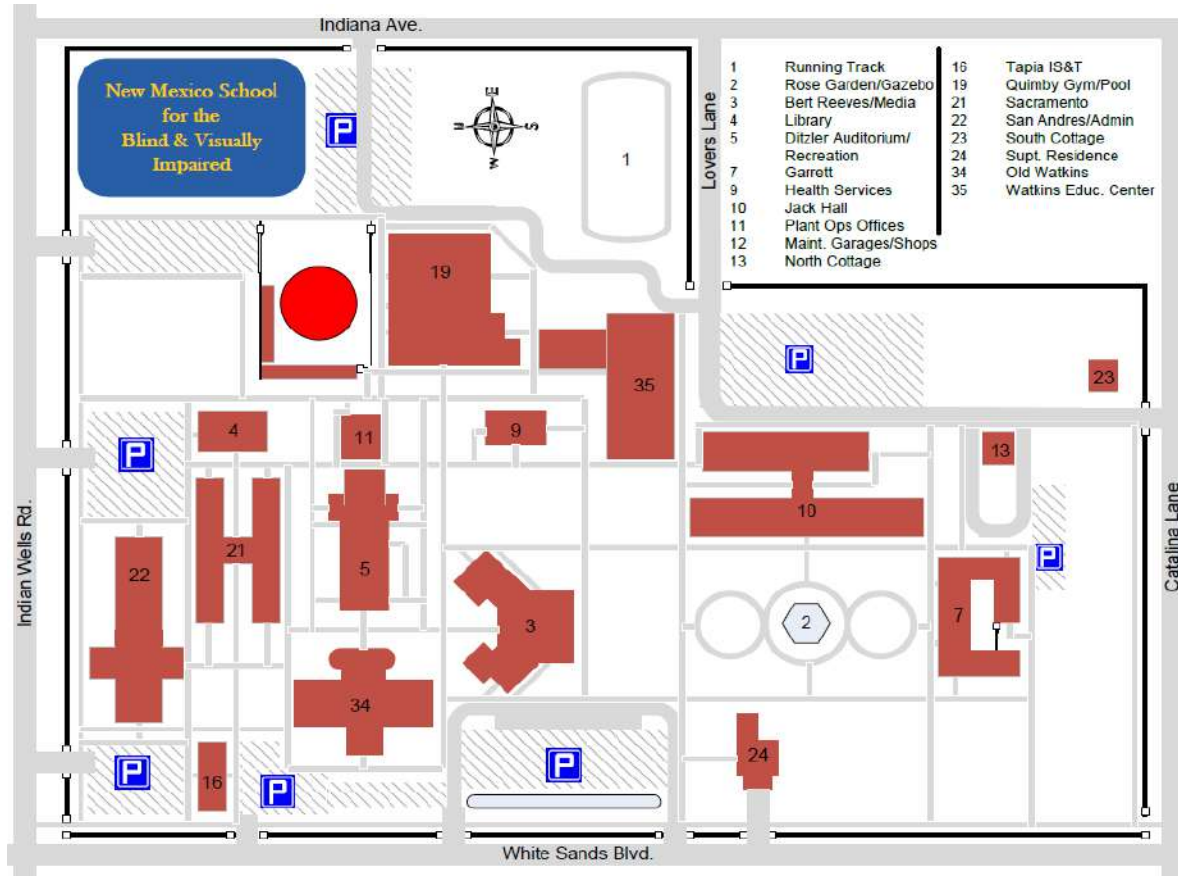
Shuttle bus service is provided for students who attend classes at the local public schools. The school bus will shuttle students to/from the Alamogordo Public Schools, Tularosa Public Schools, or NMSU-Alamogordo.

As with other transportation services provided, daily in-town students and shuttle students are expected to follow transportation rules and regulations as outlined on pages 17-18.

# TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK SECTION V

## EMERGENCY RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS EVACUATION

In the event of an emergency situation where it is deemed necessary to evacuate the campus, staff will be responsible to escort students to the “bus depot” for evacuation to a predetermined location. The “bus depot” is located on the north end of campus directly east of the Recreation Center and north of Quimby Gymnasium (red dot on map below). In the event of an evacuation, staff and students are to evacuate buildings according to building evacuation charts posted in each building. After staff and students evacuate buildings they are to proceed by the most direct path to the “bus depot” for evacuation from campus. When an evacuation from campus is deemed necessary, transportation staff will be called in and organized in the “bus depot” to provide transportation to the predetermined evacuation location. Staff and students will be evacuated in either an NMSBVI operated bus or an NMSBVI operated suburban. All students and staff must evacuate by these means. **DO NOT** use your personal vehicle to evacuate as this may cause confusion by emergency personnel attempting to verify if buildings have been completely evacuated.



## TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK    SECTION VI

### **Community Based Instruction (CBI) / FIELD TRIPS**

Following is a list of guidelines and general information regarding CBI / field trips and off campus travel. All vehicles traveling will remain as a unit unless otherwise instructed.

- 1) Students will be checked off the final trip list as they enter the bus or vehicle (or after all are seated). This will occur prior to leaving campus and upon completion of the activity as students board to return to school.
- 2) A list of students with medication needs will be included in the trip folder. Involved staff must check with health services prior to departure to determine if all students have taken their required medication.
- 3) One staff member should be designated in each vehicle to count occupants prior to and upon completion of an activity.
- 4) Students and staff will be required to return on the same vehicle they departed on unless otherwise instructed or given permission by the field trip supervisor.
- 5) Staff seating on vehicles should be arranged to provide supervision of students seated in the rear, center and front of each vehicle. Note: Passengers who occupy seats located directly next to the emergency exits must be capable of maneuvering and operating the exit doors.
- 6) All carry-on items must be placed in the storage areas provided. Luggage or other items should not be placed in aisles or doorways.
- 7) Dormitory counselors, athletic staff, and faculty are responsible for the students in their specific group. Any discipline problems, missing students, etc. should be reported immediately to the field trip supervisor.
- 8) The person in charge of each specific group should be aware of the following:
  - a) students requiring medication and the procedure for dispensing;
  - b) departure time and location;
  - c) meal specifics (time/location);
  - d) expenses covered for each student and/or money issued to students

- 9) In the instance that a student must be transported back to school (emergency/unscheduled) or to a medical facility, the appropriate school authorities should be notified immediately.
- 10) Students should not be released to any person (even parents) at any event without prior approval or consent of the trip supervisor. In the event that a student's parents/guardian or authorized representative wish to have a student released to them, an NMSBVI Student Release Form must also be completed prior to their release. A student will not be released without verifying that permission has been granted.
- 11) In the event that a field trip is cancelled for any reason, the field trip supervisor will notify all departments involved of the activity change. Food prepared for the trip may still be served to those signed up for the activity if it is being provided in place of a regular cafeteria meal.
- 12) Unplanned side trips, additional agenda or altering the original field trip destination, time or specifics should not be done without approval from the department director or a supervisor.

## TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK SECTION VII

### STUDENT GUIDELINES

The staff member assigned on a specific trip assumes supervisory responsibilities for the safety of all students who are being transported by the school. All students are expected to follow transportation rules and regulations as established by the transportation department.

NMSBVI staff are permitted to assign a suitable seating arrangement when considered necessary.

Any student failing to comply with these guidelines will lose transportation privileges including weekend trips home, at which time parents will be responsible for transporting their child(ren) to/from home each weekend.

Student guidelines are as follows:

- 1) While riding in vehicles equipped with seat belts, students shall wear them at all times. This is an active law of the State of New Mexico. Most school buses are not equipped with seat belts.
- 2) CD players, MP3 players, radios or other sound-making equipment can be used only with permission from the driver and/or aide and will require the use of headphones.
- 3) All NMSBVI transportation vehicles are equipped with DVD players; Only movies rated G, PG, and PG13 will be shown. Only one PG13 movie will be shown per trip. Students under age 13 or without parent permission to view PG13 movies will be provided alternative entertainment such as books on tape or digital books with headphones, or use of personal video devices with headphones.
- 4) Individual trash is to be collected and not left in the school bus/vehicle,
- 5) Gambling games, gambling, illegal substances, indecent literature or pictures, profane language or profane actions will not be permitted.
- 6) Rough and boisterous conduct will not be permitted in the school bus/vehicle; however, students are permitted to converse in a normal tone of voice while on school transportation.
- 7) Students shall not walk in the school bus while it is in motion. Students must remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear.
- 8) Travel attire shall be appropriate and in good taste. Students shall wear appropriate clothing for the time of year.

- 9) Students are encouraged to travel lightly on weekend trips home in order to minimize space needed in the vehicles as well as time allotted for unloading. Luggage or other items should not be placed in aisles or doorways.
- 10) Smoking or possession of tobacco products is prohibited on school transportation and during any assigned rest stops while on school transportation.
- 10) Students will not be permitted to get off the bus at any other location other than their assigned stop unless proper pre-approval has been obtained through the parents and the transportation department.
- 11) Medications for students who require it must be provided or approved by NMSBVI Health Services personnel and controlled by designated drivers/aides.

## TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK    SECTION VIII

### VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

In case of any accident involving a school vehicle, the following procedures shall be observed.

- 1) Stop the bus/vehicle immediately.
- 2) Protect accident scene so that it does not endanger safety.
- 3) Remain at the scene of the accident. Do not move the vehicle.
- 4) Render reasonable assistance to any person injured in the accident. Notify police and the school transportation department.
- 5) If it is necessary to evacuate students, make certain that all students are in a safe location away from traffic and that they are not permitted to leave the scene of the accident on their own.
- 6) Flags, flares, and /or reflectors should be placed appropriately to warn traffic.
- 7) Information such as names, license numbers, registration numbers, location, time, road and weather conditions, and a listing of all student passengers (including their seating location, if possible) should be obtained. Make no admission of liability or assume responsibility for accident.
- 8) Provisions for transporting students to their homes or back to school should be made through the transportation department.
- 9) Driver is required to fill out a school Vehicle Accident Information form at the first opportunity immediately following the accident. Multiple copies of the Vehicle Accident Information form follow this page.
- 10) In the event of a vehicle accident. The staff member driving the vehicle must immediately report to the nearest drug testing facility for a drug & alcohol test (board policy 150 pg. 4)

All NMSBVI school vehicle/buses and staff are insured by:

State of New Mexico  
General Services Department  
Risk Management Division  
Joseph St Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87503

