



UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start Transportation Plan

The Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) Van Buren Head Start (VBHS) will follow the regulations for the safe operation of vehicles to transport children participating in Head Start. Transportation is vital to the operation of the program. It is the responsibility of ALL personnel who operate vehicles of the agency to provide and observe safety procedures when traveling and transporting clients to and from one approved destination to another. Use of cell phones and texting devices is prohibited while enroute with the exception of notifying Head Start Staff of time of departure and any necessary details in reference to the route, such as absent parent, vehicle problems, etc. This information will be relayed to Head Start by the bus monitor. Staff will monitor the interior temperature of a vehicle when transporting children during extreme weather conditions to ensure child safety. Reasonable efforts will be made to control costs, quality and availability of transportation services. Bus Driver or Bus Monitor will call Head Start Staff to inform them a Pre-Trip walk inspection has been completed and if there are any concerns.

The Head Start program will assist as many families as possible who need transportation in order for their children to attend the program. Reasonable assistance will be offered to all families. In 1991 (the inception of Head Start within this county), the location of the center was based on structure availability, which was across the mountain from the only town. Our region is a rural farming area and access is not readily available to the entire community, so transportation is a dire need, costly and very limited. Because of the problems associated with such a rural, isolated community, the families of Van Buren County continue to struggle. People are pressed to find work, to have transportation to get to work, and to afford that transportation. Therefore Van Buren Head Start shall provide transportation services in assistance for families across the mountain to attend the program. Due to the limitations placed on the program related to time spent on a bus and the size of the service area (entire county), the program is unable to provide door to door services. Pick up locations are maintained in order to meet the mandates and provide transportation to as many families as possible. Pick up locations will be modified according to family needs. We further provide assistance to families by providing networking opportunities among guardians in which they could arrange a carpooling schedule within their own comforts for pick-up/drop-off days and thus cost savings to their budgets.

Vehicles used in transporting children at a minimum will meet the following requirements: a communication system using cellphones, safety equipment for use during an emergency with signs indicating locations of first aid kit, seat belt cutter and charged fire extinguisher. All buses are equipped with surveillance cameras which automatically record all transit use/events and can be retrieved via the Seon system. All buses are equipped with air conditioners and provisions will be made to ensure that water is made available on the bus in the event of need.

The Head Start program will ensure all accidents are reported in accordance with applicable state requirements. All staff are required to ensure that all children are only released to a legal parent/guardian or other individual indicated by parent/guardian in writing. Any person receiving, picking up or delivering a child will be required to sign the child in and out of the classroom attendance sheet. When transported by Head Start, transportation staff will make sure that an adult is available to assume responsibility for the child/children when delivering. Document by using and obtaining signatures on the transportation log. Bus drivers will obtain signatures. Children will be counted upon arrival and departure from the center. Upon arrival at the center the Bus Driver will check the sign in form in each classroom and view all children that were transported by bus to the center. An adult must accompany a child when crossing the street and when entering and exiting the vehicle. When arriving at the center an additional center staff will check the bus to ensure all riders have exited and in the evening prior to buses being parked after inspection for riders, monitors will call Head Start by cell phone to inform the center staff that all children have been delivered and a third person signature obtained. The reviewer shall have no other responsibilities at the time of the physical walk through of the vehicle. During phase-in it will be explained to all parents the requirement of third person signature, upon completing bus routes in the evening and on field trips, confirmation signature will be obtained at this time. Seating charts will be maintained and posted on the bus and at the center for all transportation routes and field trips. All staff will be provided with a current release and emergency contact list for all children.

All vehicles transporting children will be equipped with age appropriate height and weight restraint systems and all staff will be trained in the use, installation and maintenance of required restraint systems. All child transportation vehicles will be equipped with reverse beepers and a child safety monitoring device which prompts staff to inspect the vehicle for children. The full name of the child care agency will be placed on each side of the vehicle and the words child care transportation complaints followed by the department's toll free child care complaint phone number.

All vehicles used for the purpose of transporting children are maintained in safe operating conditions at all times. Buses will be inspected by a licensed mechanic under the pupil transportation requirements by the state of Tennessee on a yearly basis. Each vehicle will maintain an inspection sticker on the bumper, proof of insurance and a legal registration. All drivers are expected to perform a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle that he/she is driving daily, using the walk-around safety checklist. Any and all vehicles will be checked prior to usage using the checklist for that vehicle. In the event that a deficiency is found, it must be reported. When applicable, designated maintenance personnel will make necessary repairs prior to usage, or back-up vehicles will be used. Systematic preventive maintenance will be maintained according to agency procedures.

Inspection of new vehicles will be conducted upon delivery to ensure they are equipped in accordance with the bid specifications and that the manufacturer's certification of compliance with the applicable FMVSS is included with the vehicle. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start will ensure that procurement procedure is followed in the purchase of all vehicles.

The vehicle must be kept clean inside. No boxes, crates, bottles, etc., will be on board. Baggage and other items transported in the passenger compartment will be properly stored and secured. Aisles will remain clear, and doors and emergency exits will remain unobstructed at all times.

Vehicles will be swept/vacuumed daily and cleaned. If vehicles are found dirty when monitored by authorized personnel, corrective action will be taken. Vehicles will not be used for personal business. Monitor will be on board at all times. Monitor will ensure children board and dismount safely and keep order thus allowing the driver to pay strict attention to his/her driving. NO child will be left on board unattended at any time. All passengers will be seated and wearing restraint devices while the vehicle is in motion.

All persons operating agency vehicles must have a valid Tennessee Drivers License. When transporting parents, staff must have a PS endorsement (if driving a 16 passenger or more van) for such purpose. All individuals hired to drive buses will maintain a valid CDL and a safe driving record. All individuals who have CDL are required to attend student transportation training provided by TDOT yearly and maintain a valid DOT medical card. Each driver of a vehicle used to provide services must participate in an annual evaluation including an on-board observation of road performance. CPR and first aid training required for driver and bus monitor.

To ensure all staff are kept abreast of transportation laws and regulations affecting the safe transportation of our clients we will develop and implement an ongoing training plan to meet program needs. Transportation training will be implemented through regular in-service training annually. Staff will participate in cluster, state regional workshops. Training will include classroom instruction and behind the wheel instruction sufficient to enable staff to operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner, safely run a fixed route including loading and unloading children, child pick-up and release procedures, stopping at railroad crossings and performing other specialized driving maneuvers, administer basic first aid, handle emergency situations including vehicle evacuations procedures, operate any special equipment, conduct routine maintenance and safety check of the vehicles, child boarding and exiting procedures, twice yearly state licensing required transportation training, and maintain accurate records as necessary. In the event of a new hire, the Director, Education Supervisor or Transportation Specialist - having sufficient training to be a trainer will be responsible for training on the state licensing required transportation training. The Health & Disability Services Specialist is directly over the safety component and will ensure this training occurs, since Health encompasses safety of the environment.

Van Buren County Head Start will ensure that in planning fixed routes the safety of the children being transported is the primary consideration. A.M. routes will begin at 6:45 and P.M. routes will begin at 2:30. No route will exceed 45 minutes as required by state licensing unless operating under a waiver. Drivers are required to alert management staff in the event the route extends past the 45 minute requirement on a regular basis. Drivers will stay on established routes only using alternate routes in the case of an emergency. Vehicles will not be loaded beyond the maximum capacity, be required to back up or make U-turns except when necessary for reasons of safety or because of physical barriers. Stops must be located to minimize traffic disruptions and to afford a good field of view in front of and behind the vehicle. When possible, stops must be located to eliminate the need for children to cross the street or highway to board or leave the vehicle. The Department of Human Services will be notified of Pickup and Drop Off locations prior to each school year.

Training will be provided to parents/guardians and children in pedestrian safety during the Phase-In process and through classroom activities within the first 30 days. Training will include the need for an adult to assist a child when crossing the street, children will be taught safe riding

practices, safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle, safety procedures in crossing the street to and from the vehicle at stops, recognition of the danger zones around the vehicle, and emergency evacuation procedures including participating in an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the vehicle the child will be riding. The program will ensure at least 3 bus evacuation drills will be conducted during the year. Parents will be trained in the importance of reinforcing the above training provided to children regarding vehicle safety to complement the training provided to their children, so that safety practices can be reinforced in Head Start and at home by the parent. Idling of vehicles is discouraged during loading/unloading unless necessary for extreme heat or cold; the emissions/environmental health concern is addressed with guardians during the enrollment process.

Vehicles with adaptive or designed for transportation of children with disabilities will be made available as necessary. When possible, children with disabilities will be transported in vehicles used to transport other children enrolled in the Head Start program.

To ensure that quality transportation services are provided at a minimum all transportation staff must adhere to posted speed limits at all times, maintain WEX gas cards on vehicles and use WEX gas cards appropriately. Vehicle mileage logs/expense logs are to be maintained. All staff are subject to background checks and mandated drug/alcohol testing as part of employment. All vehicle accidents/incidents are to be reported immediately. When fueling vehicles absolutely no children are to be on board. Monitors will sit in the rear of the bus to ensure all children are in sight. Children will be monitored to ensure handrail is used when departing or entering the bus. Only buses will be used in transporting children to and from Head Start. Minivan will only be used when necessary for transporting children to and from medical visits and during emergency at last resort. Two staff will always be on board when transporting children.

Bus Emergency Evacuation