City Council/School Board Subcommittee

February 24, 2025

Agenda

- Approval of Feb 24 Meeting Minutes
- DASH/ACPS Transportation
  - Safety Considerations
- Collective Bargaining Update
- Other Business/ Updates

Alexandria City Public Schools

ACPS Transportation Overview, Part II

Joint Subcommittee Meeting
March 24, 2025

2020-2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All

Safety Considerations

School Transportation Code Requirements

Code	Summary
8VAC20-70-280	Requirements for school bus drivers both for employment and continued employment. Includes annual physicals, drug and alcohol testing, age requirements, etc.
8VAC20-70-160	Mandates an annual review of bus routes and a written vehicular/pedestrian traffic control plan to identify safety hazards.
8VAC20-70-80	Establishes safety requirements for loading/discharging pupils, including: • Stops must be made in the right-hand lane at designated points visible from both directions. • Pupils are picked up and discharged only at approved stops, except in emergencies. • Warning devices must be used when stopped to alert traffic. • Pupils crossing the road must do so in front of the bus, waiting for a hand signal. • On divided highways, buses should stop on the side where pupils live.
8VAC20-70-70	Requires all school buses operated at public expense to be equipped with traffic warning devices, as outlined in §§ 46.2-1090 and 46.2-1090.1 of the Code of Virginia
8VAC20-70-140	Requires monthly crash reports involving school buses, pupils, or personnel to be submitted to the Department of Education, including crash causes and injury details. Serious crashes must be reported within one working day. A crash is defined as property damage of $1,500 or more or any injury.

This chart is **not exhaustive** but provides a snapshot of key school bus infrastructure and driver requirements to ensure student safety. Full VA Code can be found here

ACPS Driver Requirements

Requirement		Notes
Age Requirement		Must be at least 18 years of age
Background Check		Per ACPS Policy
DMV Records		Applicants must provide records from the Department of Motor Vehicles verifying that, in the past five years, they have not been convicted of DUI, refusal to take a blood or breath test, a felony, or participation in an alcohol safety/rehabilitation program (§ 18.2-271.1, Code of Virginia). Within the past 12 months, they must not have been convicted of two or more moving violations or required to attend a driver improvement clinic by the DMV Commissioner (§ 46.2-498, Code of Virginia).
Moral Character Verification		Drivers must have at least two statements verifying good moral character
CDL		All drivers must complete minimum 24 hours classroom and 24 hours behind-the-wheel training to become CDL certified (vetted annually)
Annual Physicals		
Drug and Alcohol Testing (Upon Hire)		Per VDOT Standards
Drug and Alcohol Testing (Random Post-Hire)		Random drug testing for school bus drivers is mandated by the Virginia Administrative Code, specifically 8VAC20-70-280.
Drug and Alcohol Testing (Post Accident)		Based on reasonable suspicion and type of accident
Specialized Training		ACPS Drivers and Monitors required to complete training for Autism Spectrum Disorder

Safety Protocols, SPED

SPED students can only be handed off to an authorized adult/receiver

Must adhere to student's IEP for specialized transportation

Equipment options must available to ensure compliance per IEP

Five-point car seats	Security and restraint vests/harnesses	Seat belt buckle guards	Wheelchair accessible vehicles	Low clearance vehicles	Fidget bags

Bus monitors are required on SPED buses and may be required per student's IEP for private carrier transportation

Safety Protocols (Various)

Adults that have not cleared background check process not allowed on a school bus

If any student feels unsafe/uncomfortable exiting the bus, they are returned to school

Bus evacuations required at each school twice per school year

GPS systems installed on each bus; families have access to real-time bus location

Video camera systems installed on each bus

School Bus Incident Protocols

Student Behavior (Serious Concerns)

- Driver contacts dispatch office for guidance
- Students are returned immediately to school for assistance from school administrator **OR**
- APD is contacted for assistance (school administrator is notified immediately)
- If APD is contacted, ParentSquare message sent by Communications Department

Accident

- Driver contacts dispatch office, providing pertinent information
- Dispatch office contacts APD
- If students on board, must be cleared by EMS
- Dispatch office contacts school administrator
- Transportation Supervisor reports to the scene to assist with information exchange and students on board
- ParentSquare text message/alert sent to affected families
- Bus continues on route or students transferred to another bus (once cleared by EMS)
- ParentSquare email sent to affected families

Liability Insurance Requirements

Alexandria City Public Schools

Questions?

Superintendent
Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt

School Board
Michelle Rief, Chair
Kelly Carmichael Booz, Vice Chair
Abdulahi Abdalla
Tim Beaty
Christopher Harris
Donna Kenley
Ryan Reyna
Alexander Crider Scioscia
Ashley Simpson Baird

DASH-ACPS Coordination

Safety & Security Program Overview

Introduction to DASH Safety & Security

DASH Operator Recognitions for Safe Driving

- Fully staffed Safety & Security Department – responsible for all policies, monitoring, and compliance enforcement .
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
  - Safety Performance Monitoring/Risk Management
    - Accidents
    - Near Miss Reporting
    - Operator Assaults
    - Safety Review Committee (SRC)
- Priority : safety and well -being of our passengers and operators.
- Public transit is one of the safest modes of transportation in the world.

Driver Training & Background Checks

- Bus Operators hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with Passenger & Air Brake Endorsements.
- Bus Operators undergo extensive training, including SMITH System training, emergency response, de -escalation, customer service, and more.
- Background checks and regular drug & alcohol testing ensure operator standards and safety.
- Continuous education and refresher training is mandatory.

Vehicle Safety Standards & Incident Response

- Buses undergo rigorous safety inspections and preventative maintenance per FTA & Manufacturer guidelines .
- Real-time GPS tracking and onboard surveillance enhance security.
- Emergency response procedures involve coordination with the Alexandria Police Department.
- Supervisors are dispatched for any safety or security concerns.

Fiscal Year	Total Ridership	Total Incidents	Total Incident Rate (per 100,000 boardings)	Estimated Annual Student Boardings	Student-Involved Incidents	Student-Involved Incident Rate (per 100,000 boardings)
2023	4.5m	14	0.31	429k	4	0.93
2024	5.3m	20	0.38	398k	1	0.25

DASH Incident Response Highlights

19 FIELD SUPERVISORS

ON DUTY FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

8 – 10 CAMERAS ON EACH BUS

(14 ON AN ARTICULATED BUS)

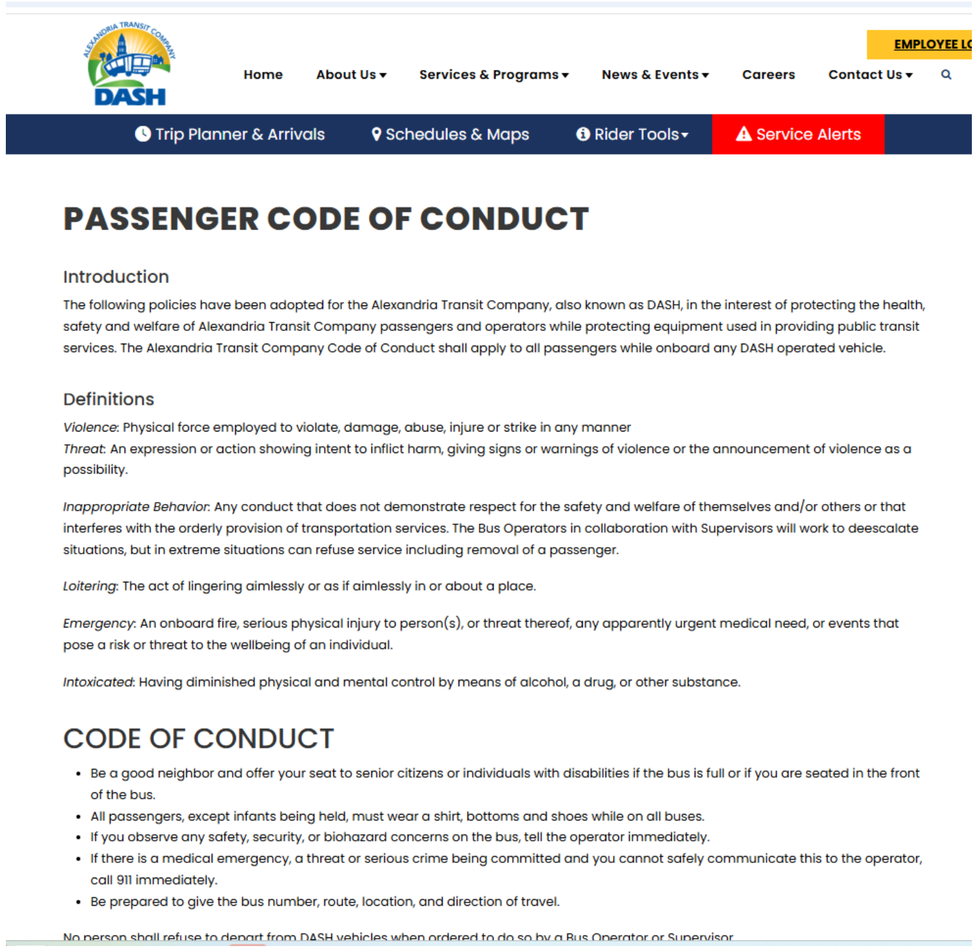
CENTRAL DISPATCH COORDINATED FOR FIELD SUPERVISORS AND POLICE/EMS

VIRGINIA TRANSIT LIABILITY POOL (VTLP)

FULL INSURANCE COVERAGE

Passenger Safety & Code of Conduct

- Clear rules of conduct for all riders to ensure a safe and comfortable environment.
- Zero-tolerance policy for violence, harassment, and disruptive behavior.
- Reports of misconduct result in immediate investigation and action.



DASH

EMPLOYEE LO

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Trip Planner & Arrivals | Schedules & Maps | Rider Tools | Service Alerts

PASSENGER CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The following policies have been adopted for the Alexandria Transit Company, also known as DASH, in the interest of protecting the health, safety and welfare of Alexandria Transit Company passengers and operators while protecting equipment used in providing public transit services. The Alexandria Transit Company Code of Conduct shall apply to all passengers while onboard any DASH operated vehicle.

Definitions

Violence: Physical force employed to violate, damage, abuse, injure or strike in any manner
Threat: An expression or action showing intent to inflict harm, giving signs or warnings of violence or the announcement of violence as a possibility.

Inappropriate Behavior: Any conduct that does not demonstrate respect for the safety and welfare of themselves and/or others or that interferes with the orderly provision of transportation services. The Bus Operators in collaboration with Supervisors will work to deescalate situations, but in extreme situations can refuse service including removal of a passenger.

Loitering: The act of lingering aimlessly or as if aimlessly in or about a place.

Emergency: An onboard fire, serious physical injury to person(s), or threat thereof, any apparently urgent medical need, or events that pose a risk or threat to the wellbeing of an individual.

Intoxicated: Having diminished physical and mental control by means of alcohol, a drug, or other substance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Be a good neighbor and offer your seat to senior citizens or individuals with disabilities if the bus is full or if you are seated in the front of the bus.
- All passengers, except infants being held, must wear a shirt, bottoms and shoes while on all buses.
- If you observe any safety, security, or biohazard concerns on the bus, tell the operator immediately.
- If there is a medical emergency, a threat or serious crime being committed and you cannot safely communicate this to the operator, call 911 immediately.
- Be prepared to give the bus number, route, location, and direction of travel.

No person shall refuse to depart from DASH vehicles when ordered to do so by a Bus Operator or Supervisor

Other Highlights/Recap

- Injury liability: $20m per occurrence.
- FTA safety compliance – audited every 3 years.
- Proven track record transporting Students.
- Response to growth in Student Ridership with Increased supervision and enforcement to address any incidents from growing.
- Public transit is a universally safe, cost-effective, and community-friendly transportation alternative.

Questions?