

# Risk Management Guideline

## Student Transportation

### Background:

Historically, schools have voluntarily provided for the transportation of students to and from home and school, as well as for athletic competitions and for education-related field trips. With the erosion of funding for student transportation, many schools have been forced to eliminate various forms of student transportation. Others have outsourced transportation and many now charge parents for a portion of the costs associated with providing transportation. In addition, the risk exposure for transporting students continues to escalate as a result of the increased volume of vehicles on the road and prevalent litigation.

Insurance coverage for the transportation provided by CRSIG members is self-insured, which means that the participants of the pool “contribute” funding in order to pay for losses. As a result, CRSIG depends very heavily on prudent and pro-active risk management by its members.

### Recommendation:

All school events involving the need for transportation to offsite locations should undergo an approval process that includes an evaluation by an administrator who can verify compliance with the CRSIG Risk Management Guidelines.

In order to ensure effective student accountability, appropriate chaperone assignments and safe transportation for students, CRSIG recommends the following measures be taken.

### GUIDELINES:

- 1) Ask the most important question: “Does this offsite activity or event arise out of a direct relationship to the school’s curriculum, athletic, musical or other school program?” If not, the school needs to decline the request and advise the staff member that non school-sponsored events are not to be advertised via flyers, announcements, etc. using school equipment or time during the school day.
- 2) Ask the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important question: “If student transportation is needed, should the district sponsor the transportation or leave it up to parents?” Please pay special attention to the following guidelines if transportation is needed.

## SCHOOL SPONSORED versus NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRANSPORTATION

### *NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED*

1) In cases where the school is not sponsoring transportation for athletics, field trips, etc. the school should include an acknowledgement by the parent on the permission slip that they understand transportation will not be provided. (This is paramount for middle school through high school events to prevent students from telling parents that the school is arranging the transportation while they are in fact setting up the arrangements themselves.)

2) If a school claims that it is not providing transportation, but participates, organizes or coordinates arrangements for students to get rides from parents, the school is in essence, “providing” transportation and has taken on the responsibility for the safety of each student.

### *SCHOOL SPONSORED*

1) CRSIG recommends that whenever possible, the school provide transportation utilizing buses. This allows the member greater control over student accountability, staff supervision and heightened awareness of student riders by other vehicle operators. The buses may be school owned buses or outsourced commercial lines.

2) If the schools is unable to utilize buses or is forced to use buses in conjunction with parent automobiles, the following guidelines should be used;

A. The school should utilize a pre-approval process for any individual providing rides in a private vehicle or school owned vehicle. This process should be completed ahead of time in order for each volunteer driver to be approved prior to the day of the transportation event. Each driver should be approved by a school administrator who has verified the following:

1. No drivers under 25 is allowed to transport students
2. No individual who is not a parent or legal guardian of a student is allowed to transport students (eg. Parent’s boyfriend, girlfriend, family friend, student’s sister or brother). If a school considers allowing other than parents to drive students, a background check should be performed.
3. Proof of a valid California Driver’s License has been provided by the driver.
4. Proof of current automobile insurance has been provided by the driver of a private vehicle for the vehicle to be utilized.
5. Students attending the event have been specifically assigned by school staff to each private vehicle and driver.

6. No non-student riders are allowed to accompany the group on the bus or in other automobiles that will be used (student siblings, relatives, friends, staff family members, etc.).
- 3) Parent permission slips should always accurately describe how the individual student will be transported (by bus vs. auto) and with whom the student will ride (bus vs. name of driver). The parent should give express permission for students who are riding in private automobiles.

Note: Please keep in mind that friendships may encounter difficulties between the permission slip signing and day of the event. Any changes need to be managed by the staff member in charge and the parent of the student rider needs to approve any changes to the assignment.

- 4) A copy of the student permission slips depicting emergency contacts and special needs information should be retained by the staff member in charge. An additional copy should be provided to each bus driver and/or vehicle drivers prior to departure from the school site.
- 5) Drivers of private vehicles should be required to caravan with the bus or other vehicles for events where parent will drop off and pick up students at the school (eg. field trips, athletic events).

The following transportation forms can be found in the Risk Management Forms section of this manual:

*Administrator Authorization For Private Vehicle Driver*

*Non-District Provided Transportation*

*Non-District Provided Transportation – Field Trip or Excursion - Use of Private Vehicle*

*CRSIG Student Transportation Options & Forms Matrix*

(Note: Districts may revise each form to fit the type of event utilized but should double-check any revisions with CRSIG.)

(Student Transportation2010-RMGuideline)