

## **COKES CHAPEL UMC – Bus Policy**

The Bus Ministry of Cokes Chapel UMC shall be operated under the general supervision of the Board of Trustees. A sub-committee, formed by the Trustees, is responsible to the Trustees for developing a written policy that clearly establishes standards for all drivers and vehicles. This policy, approved by the Church Administrative Council and the Board of Trustees meets this requirement.

### **PURPOSE**

The Bus Ministry will provide safe, dependable group transportation for the Church Family to enhance the programs and ministries of the Church.

### **OPERATING POLICY**

#### **Use of the Bus:**

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Any CCUMC group has approval and authority to use the bus. Groups sponsored by or connected to CCUMC shall be allowed to use the bus upon special request made to the approval of the Trustees or the Trustees appointed Bus Administrators. The bus will not be available to individuals nor to outside groups or organizations. Trips outside of the state of Georgia must be cleared in advance through the Administrator, in consultation with the Trustees.
2. **NUMBER OF PASSENGERS REQUIREMENT:** The maximum number of passengers SHALL NOT exceed the capacity of the bus design, including the driver. Cargo SHALL NOT be hauled without prior approval of the Trustees excluding luggage.
3. **SCHEDULING:** All proposed uses of the bus will be requested through the Church Secretary. Availability is a first come, first serve basis. Priority is given to Church services pick-up. The group using the bus is responsible for securing a driver from the Approved Drivers list, which is kept by the Bus Administrator.
4. **TRIP RECORDS:** The bus will leave from and return to the Church parking lot. The bus will be parked in the designated parking area. Keys and Trip Request Packet, as described in SUPPORTING MATERIALS (pg 5) will be obtained from the Church Secretary by Thursday noon for weekend trips. A second set of bus keys will be held by the Group Leader, or an Assistant, if the Group Leader is the Driver.
5. **TRIP SUPERVISION:** For Children and Youth activities it is the responsibility of the Leader of the group using the bus to provide proper adult supervision. An adult assistant will be assigned on every trip so the driver has access to immediate help with any distraction or other adverse situation. Adult/Child ratios will be kept according to the Church's Safe Sanctuary Policy guidelines. **THE BUS DRIVER CANNOT BE COUNTED AS AN ADULT SUPERVISOR!**

6. **PASSENGER CONDUCT:** All users of the Church bus are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies Christian principles and represents the church's values. The Trustees reserve the right to deny use of the bus to passengers whose conduct becomes detrimental to the general safety of the group. Vandalism or property damage shall be paid for by the person/group responsible for the damage and constitutes due reason to deny use of the bus for future trips. The Leaders and Adult Supervisors/Assistants shall have the sole responsibility for passenger conduct.
7. **BUS CLEANLINESS:** Each group is responsible for cleaning the bus, including picking up any refuse, cleaning/sweeping/vacuuming all debris from the seats, floor, corners, and ledges. Seats should be returned to upright position with arm rests upright and seat belts to stowage position on top of seats. All windows should be cleaned and must be closed. The post-trip checklist for cleaning/trip completion will be used on each occasion. The Bus Administrator is responsible for washing the exterior of the bus except on the occasion of out of the ordinary soiling.
8. **BUS LOG:** The driver is responsible for completing the Bus Log and Trip Report, including any comments, and returning same to the Church Office following the trip (see #4 above). Forms will be filed in the BUS BOOK for at least one (1) year.
9. **ILLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOL, SMOKING or VAPING - NONE** are allowed on the bus by passengers or driver.
10. **SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** The Trustees shall ensure that a first-aid kit, jumper cables, a fire extinguisher, emergency flares, and any other necessary items are maintained in the bus. A secured box will be placed on the bus for cables and flares. The Driver is responsible for the equipment and supplies appropriate for the season and planned trip, such as maps, GPS and Cell Phone. The Cell Phone number must be on the Bus Reservation Form, which stays in the Church Office. Drivers **MUST** complete his/her own pre-trip inspection checklist to ensure that all items are present prior to departure from the Church parking lot. Any first-aid items, flares or fire extinguishers used on any bus trip must be recorded on the trip report by the driver when the form is returned to the Church Office.
11. **TRIP SPOKESPERSON:** In the event of an accident or emergency situation involving the Church bus, the church should be represented at the scene by one individual in any ensuing discussion with authorities, insurance representatives, etc. The driver shall be the temporary spokesperson on the scene for the Church in any such situation. The alternate will be the selected Adult Assistant in the event the driver is unable to perform this responsibility. Once the accident is cleared from the scene, all further communications with authorities or insurance representatives will be routed to the church office.

## DRIVERS

1. REQUIREMENTS: The Church Office shall maintain a list of approved drivers for the Church bus with the Bus Keys and trip forms. The Approved Drivers list shall be renewed annually and shared with the Church's insurance carrier.
  - A. To be approved, a driver MUST be a member of Cokes Chapel or STAFF or PROGRAM LEADER, at least 25 years of age and have:
  - B. For a Bus with 15+ passenger capacity:
    - 1) CLASS D License for a 15 passenger capacity bus, or
    - 2) Commercial Drivers License with a passenger endorsement for 16 or more passengers.
    - 3) Attend the Trustees sponsored Bus Driver Vehicle Orientation training session and must drive the bus for a supervised familiarization road test.
  - C. All drivers must provide a copy of their current GA driver's License and attest that they have had:
    - 1) NO DUI OR RECKLESS DRIVING CITATIONS!
    - 2) NO more than two (2) moving violations in the past 5 years.
2. AVAILABILITY: A Driver may be added to the Approve Drivers list once they meet all the requirements, as stated above.
3. TRIP RESPONSIBILITY: The Driver of the Church bus will have sole responsibility and authority in matters pertaining to the bus operation, maintenance, and safety (see pre-trip Checklist). The driver is responsible for complying with this policy, obeying all traffic laws, completing post-trip requirements and returning the key, Log and Trip Report to the Church Office.
  - A. Mirrors: Make sure the side and rear view mirrors are clean, functioning, and adjusted properly before departing.
  - B. Seats: Drivers should adjust and position their seat prior to moving the bus. All passengers should be seated and buckled up according to the law.
  - C. Fluid Levels: Check all fluid levels regularly. This should be done prior to each trip.
  - D. Lights: Check all Headlights, tail-lights, brake lights and backup lights. Check turn signals and emergency flashers.
  - E. Windshield and Wipers: Be sure the front windshield is un-obstructed and no cracks exist, especially in the driver's line of vision. Wipers and washers must be operating

4. TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITY: The Trustees shall insure that all drivers are properly trained in the operations of the Church bus and that they are supplied with all pertinent information and instruction. Accordingly, prospective drivers will receive instruction on those areas listed on the Bus Driver Vehicle Orientation Form contained in this policy, and he/she will drive the bus for a supervised familiarization road test.
- A. Driving buses and towing trailers present significantly different driving challenges than normal passenger car operations. Also, adverse weather and road conditions, caravanning and transporting passengers all present hazards the untrained driver may not be prepared to handle.
  - B. When transporting passengers, extreme care must be taken during passenger loading and unloading. Pick up and drop off passengers on the same side of the street as their destination. If a child must cross the street, provide an adult escort. Plan transportation routes in advance to ensure this is done properly.
  - C. Mechanical Breakdown: Make sure hazard lights are flashing and flares are available. When using flares, place them 100 and 200 feet to the rear of the vehicle. Keep passengers in the vehicle at all times unless there is a fire or fumes pose added danger to them. CALL for help, 911 as soon as possible and be prepared to make alternative transportation available to passengers.
  - D. Accidents: Written accident instructions from the CCUMC Insurance Agent should be available and carried on the bus at all times. Information should include when to call police; how to report an accident; obtaining witness contacts; notification of group and families; and notification of CCUMC's insurance company. Reference the TRIP SPOKESPERSON, above.
  - E. Driver Errors: Since driver error is the major factor in motor vehicle accidents, the driver becomes the greatest area of influence in a safe motoring experience. Consequently, there are some important, defensive driver skills to use in avoiding the terrible results of a highway accident. The National Highway Traffic Safety Agency (NHTSA) supports throughout the country on defensive driving the following techniques it feels are very important for a driver to observe:
    - 1) Expect the unexpected, and always have a way out.
    - 2) Never tailgate. For Highway driving leave 5 or more car lengths between you and the vehicle in front of you. Leave a 2 car lengths between you and the vehicle in front of you on town roads, and one car length at stops.
    - 3) Look out ahead. Be aware of what's going on several vehicles in front of you.
    - 4) Keep your eyes moving to the front, side, and rear.
    - 5) Anticipate potential accidents and situations, and prepare for a way out.
    - 6) Before entering an open intersection, look left, right and left again.

- 7) Do not insist on the right-of-way. Be willing to yield always on the side of safety.
- 8) Do not use a cell phone while driving. Pass calls to an assistant.
- 9) Never drive under the influence of medication, alcohol, or drugs.
- 10) Remember, a driver may not see you, but they definitely know who owns the bus.
- 11) Drive as if the passengers have open containers on their laps.
- 12) Driver shall attempt to park in such a way as to avoid backing up if possible.

## OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

1. **BUDGET:** An amount shall be allocated in the Church budget to cover annual operating and maintenance expenses, Insurance and bus expenses for activities not reimbursed.
2. **TRIP CHARGES:** There shall be NO CHARGE for the following:
  - a. Any trip considered a Mission trip.
  - b. Riders transported to and from worship services or special Church-wide events.
  - c. Church groups attending District-wide or Conference-wide events (when the budget permits, or when approved by the Trustees).
  - d. Other specific events approved by the Trustees.
  - e. Fuel for any trip not covered by a,b,c, or d will be paid for by passenger donations.
3. **RESPONSIBILITY:** The Trustees are responsible for major items of upkeep.

### SAFETY:

At all times, MAINTENANCE the driver of the Church bus shall have final responsibility and authority in matters relating to the safety of the bus and its passengers. In this regard, passenger discipline is related to safety. Keep the Church and Trustees informed of any trip abnormalities.

### REVIEW OF POLICIES:

As authorized by the Church Council and Board of Trustees, this Church Bus Policy may be reviewed at any time by the Trustees. The Trustees reserve the right to approve exceptions to this policy on an individual basis.

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

The following forms comprise the TRIP REQUEST PACKAGE, which is available from the Church Office:

1. CCUMC Bus Policy – Signed by the group Leader requesting the use of the Church
2. Passenger Log
3. Emergency Contacts
4. Trip Log and Checklist

BUS POLICY ACCEPTANCE

1. A signed copy of the CCUMC Bus Policy is required for a driver to be included on the Approved Drivers List.
2. Signing the below is to attest that the individual has read and will abide by the CCUMC Bus Policy.

Driver Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This document approved by the Cokes Chapel Board of Trustees  
Date: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Effective Date: June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, recertified 1/2020