Transportation - Bus Idling

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of this guideline is to eliminate all unnecessary idling by East Allen County Schools’ school buses such that idling time is minimized in all aspects of school bus operation and to reduce vehicle exhaust that has the potential to be drawn into the building. This guideline applies to the operation of every corporation-owned school bus, and public and private vehicles on school grounds.

Section 2. Rationale. Vehicle exhaust and diesel fumes from idling school buses can accumulate in and around the bus and potentially pose a health risk to children, drivers, and the community at large. Exposure to vehicle exhaust can cause lung damage and respiratory problems. Vehicle exhaust also exacerbates asthma and existing allergies, and long-term exposure may increase the risk of lung cancer. Idling buses waste fuel and financial resources of the school corporation.

The school corporation shall post signs in areas where idling is prohibited.

Section 3. General Statement. It is the desire of East Allen County Schools to improve the air quality and associated health impact of people, particularly children, in the geographic area served by the Corporation by establishing standards for school bus idling.

Section 4. Corporation Vehicle Idling Time. All operators of any East Allen County Schools’ school bus will not idle (on school grounds or off school grounds) for longer than five (5) minutes unless:

1. There are extreme weather conditions (meaning 30 degrees (Fahrenheit) or less) and the purpose is to warm the interior of the bus;

2. Longer idling time is necessary to facilitate the loading and unloading of students of special needs;

3. There are safety or emergency situations;

4. There are maintenance or mechanical inspection/repair issues requiring a longer time to facilitate the inspection/repair process, or

5. The bus is idling in traffic.

6. Between 20 degrees (Fahrenheit) and 32 degrees (Fahrenheit), buses will be allowed to idle for no more than fifteen (15) minutes; and,
7. At 20 degrees (Fahrenheit) or below, buses will be allowed to idle until front windows are defrosted and all safety equipment is operable, generally, no more than thirty (30) minutes.

Section 5. **Loading/Unloading at Schools.** All buses, arriving at schools to load or unload students, that are going to remain at the school longer than three (3) minutes shall have their engines turned off as soon as possible, and left off, until the buses are ready to depart to eliminate idling time and reduce harmful emissions. The school bus should not be restarted until it is ready to depart and there is a clear path to exit the pick-up area. This provision applies not only to buses on regular routes but also applies to field trips and supplemental routes. Buses should not idle while waiting for students during field trips, extracurricular activities or other events where students are transported off school grounds.

In colder weather, schools are directed to provide a space inside the school where bus drivers who arrive early can wait.

Section 6. **Special Needs Buses Exception.** Because of the certain unique requirements (i.e. lift equipment for loading and unloading students with disabilities), Section 5 shall not apply to special needs buses. However, operators of special needs buses are encouraged to minimize idling times where possible.

Section 7. **Public and Private Vehicles Idling Time.** Drivers of all public and private vehicles are to turn off the engine if the vehicle is to be stopped more than three (3) minutes in locations where vehicle exhaust may be drawn into the building or while on school grounds.

Legal Reference:
410 IAC 33-4-3