**HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**PUPIL TRANSPORTATION OFFICE**

**GUIDELINES FOR VIDEO/AUDIO SYSTEMS**

**ON CONTRACTOR-OWNED BUSES**

**PURPOSE:** The Howard County Public School System’s Pupil Transportation Office (PTO) believes that the safety and security of students are top priorities. Use of school bus video and audio systems (hereinafter, “system or systems”) supports the efforts of the transportation office and school administrators to protect bus passengers, bus personnel, and property. These systems help deter bullying, vandalism, and other offenses, reinforce driver and student accountability, document chain of events, and substantiate or refute allegations of wrong doing.

For these reasons, the Howard County Public Schools’ PTO supports the installation of camera systems on buses owned by the Howard County Board of Education and buses operated by private bus contractors who provide services to the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

**ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION**

1. Systems will be purchased by and installed by a licensed vendor selected by HCPSS at no cost to the contractor. The systems are the sole property of HCPSS.
2. The installation will be done in such a manner as not to damage other components or interfere with the safe operation of the bus. HCPSS will be responsible for any damage done to any components of the bus during installation, removal, and/or, replacement of equipment.
3. Each bus will be equipped with a camera system that will capture video and audio. The system is also equipped with GPS capabilities.

**OPERATION AND REPAIR**

1. The system operates as soon as the engine is started and will operate a maximum of five (5) minutes after the engine is turned off, unless additional run time is requested by the contractor. The system also operates when the key is in auxiliary mode.
2. The contractor is to exercise care to prevent damage, destruction, or unauthorized access to the system. As part of the daily pre-trip, the contractor will confirm the operating lights are working on the system and report any malfunction to the Transportation Office within one business day.
3. Provided the contractor exercises ordinary care, the contractor is not responsible for unauthorized access, damage or destruction of the system by others, such as vandalism.
4. All repairs and maintenance on the system is the sole financial responsibility of HCPSS.
5. HCPSS is responsible to ensure that the system is in proper working order. The system will be checked for proper operation and damage at each of three (3) bus inspections and any time a hard drive is retrieved by an HCPSS official.

**USE OF VIDEO**

1. The hard drive may be retrieved or recordings may be downloaded to an HCPSS computer or flash drive only by HCPSS authorized staff based on the following:
2. Receipt of a parent complaint/concern regarding an incident affecting a student
3. Request from HCPSS administrator to assist with investigating a reported incident
4. Request from school vehicle contractor regarding an incident on the bus
5. Request from a law enforcement agency or Security Coordinator
6. Request from Transportation Area Manager
7. Hard drives may be retrieved only by the following HCPSS officials:
8. Transportation Director and/or Area Managers

b. Authorized school building administrator

1. Only the following HCPSS officials are authorized to review recorded material from a system:
2. Transportation staff members
3. Central Office Executive Staff
4. School Security
5. Risk Management
6. Accident Review Committee
7. School Administrators
8. School Resource Officers
9. A *Chain of Custody Form* will be completed by the HCPSS official who retrieves a hard drive from the bus.
10. All video/audio surveillance cameras, equipment, recordings, and images that are electronically and digitally stored on computers and hard copies are considered property of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and are subject to the rules, policies, and regulation set by the Board of Education of Howard County, as well as meeting statutory standards established by local, state, and federal laws.
11. Following advance notification, the contractor shall grant access to the system, within 24 hours, to an authorized HCPSS official to inspect the system for operation and/or to retrieve the hard drive.
12. If the contractor is asked by the PTO to drive the bus to the Central Office for the purpose of pulling the hard drive, the contractor will be reimbursed for their time and mileage.
13. If an audio/video recording is used to support a disciplinary action against a student, the portion of the recording depicting the student’s conduct shall be retained by school administration for a minimum of one (1) year.
14. If the images captured by a video camera are used as the basis of disciplinary action for a student, the video segment should be retained/maintained by the school as part of the student's disciplinary record for a period of at least one year.  It is NOT the educational record of student bystanders who are pictured in the video but were not involved in the incident.
15. If the video is deemed to be a part of the student's disciplinary file, the parent of the student being disciplined has the right to VIEW the video.  If possible the face of the other students should be blurred out.  (Most schools do not have the technology to accomplish this)  If it is not possible to blur the faces of the students not involved, then the parents of those students not involved WOULD HAVE the right to view the part of the video containing their child.
16. A copy of the video may not be released to ANY parent.
17. Any driver facing disciplinary sanctions based upon recorded acts of alleged misconduct shall have an opportunity to review the portion of the recording depicting the alleged acts of misconduct.
18. The system will not be used to complete a Maryland State Office of Education required on-board evaluation.
19. HCPSS expects full cooperation with the administration of the guidelines set forth above.

**RELEASE OF VIDEO**

1. To protect the confidentiality of our student passengers, any request from unauthorized personnel to view recorded material must be received in writing and will be considered on a case by case basis. HCPSS may require the issuance of a subpoena authorizing the release of a video recording.