# STUDENT, PARENT & TEACHER

# Transportation Handbook

**REVISED AUGUST 2019** 





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# PLEASE RETAIN THIS HANDBOOK FOR FUTURE REFERENCE





# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to give everyone involved a better understanding of school bus transportation and to reflect the desire of the Yelm Community Schools Board of Directors to keep parents, students, and staff aware of current policies and procedures.

Our school transportation system is a cooperative venture between Yelm Community Schools, parents, students, community members, and law enforcement agencies. Student transportation has become an essential part of today's educational system with more than 75 percent of all students being transported to and from school daily.

The safety of your student depends a great deal on the knowledge, judgment, and skill of the bus driver. This is an assignment and responsibility our Transportation Department enthusiastically embraces. We welcome your partnership and support to enhance our Transportation program.

Thank you for this opportunity to communicate with you! Please feel free to give us a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

# Dawn Avery

Transportation Director Yelm Community Schools

#### TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

#### MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to providing the safest and most reliable means of transportation for each student within our charge

#### VISION STATEMENT

We will make this a place where our employees are proud to work. We will seek continuous improvement and encourage innovation.

We will promote a safe and secure work environment.

We will embrace technology as it becomes available.

We will be good stewards of the public's tax dollars.

# YOUR SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

The driver of a school bus must exhibit many extraordinary characteristics. As drivers, they must acknowledge that the students and their parents have allotted a great deal of trust in them. Drivers must also realize they are responsible for a priceless cargo. Each driver willingly accepts the overwhelming responsibility for the safety of your students.

The requirements of a professional school bus driver are diversified and comprehensive. There are few people outside the profession who recognize or appreciate the qualifications required of the professional school bus driver.

The professional school bus driver has to be a defensive driver. In order to accomplish this, they need to have a good mental attitude. The driver must be respectful, not only to traffic situations, but also take into consideration the personal behavior of each and every student sitting behind them.

They must continuously set a good example for the sake of the student, by their manners, language, dress and actions. In relationships with you as parents, the driver must keep an open line of communication to assure you their main goal is the safe delivery of your children to and from school.

#### **BUS STOPS**

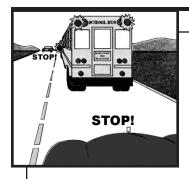
Yelm Community Schools has established specific policies for school bus drivers making stops to load and unload students.

The location and length of bus routes, along with bus stops, is determined by the School Board or its designated officials. Drivers do not deviate from these approved routes, nor do they pickup or discharge students at stops other than their assigned stops without prior approval.

School bus stops are located with maximum safety for the student. Equally important is the safety of other motorists, pedestrians and students on the bus. The driver must constantly be on the alert that the bus is visible at all times. When, in the opinion of the bus driver, a designated stop is no longer safe, it is their responsibility to request approval to relocate that stop.

Normal en route loading and unloading should be achieved by the bus stopping in the traffic lane to give students full protection of the stop paddle and red flashing lights.

# SHARING THE ROAD WITH A SCHOOL BUS



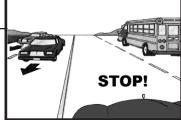
Whenever you see the alternating red flashing lights **YOU MUST STOP** if:

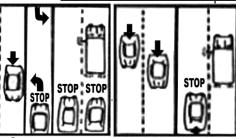
- you are in a two-lane roadway (one lane in each direction)
- you are on a multiple lane roadway (three or more lanes) and you are traveling in the same direction as the bus.

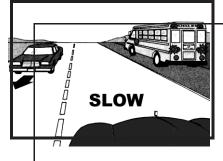
#### If the roadway has multiple lanes

(three or more) and the bus is stopped for students with the stop paddle extended and red flashing lights:

- you must stop only if traveling in the same direction.
- cars traveling in the opposite direction need not stop.







A school bus may pull completely off the roadway to load or unload students. When this happens the bus will have its amber hazard lights flashing. You do NOT have to stop in either direction, whether on a two-lane or multiple lane roadway. However, you must SLOW DOWN and USE CAUTION as you pass the bus.

## MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Parents, please help your children be safe on their way to and from school. Please remind them of their responsibilities and these SAFETY TIPS.

**BE ON TIME ARRIVE 5 MINUTES EARLY.** Go directly to the bus stop. Remember that being late can be dangerous; when you're in a hurry you might forget to look both ways or wait for a signal, etc.

**STAY OUT OF THE ROAD** at the stop and wait in an orderly manner at least 6 feet from the edge of the roadway.

WALK FACING TRAFFIC when walking along the road.

CROSS WITH CARE. If you must cross, wait until the bus is stopped, red lights are flashing, and the driver signals to you, then look both ways. Always cross 6-10 feet in FRONT where the driver can see you, NEVER BEHIND THE BUS! Stay away from the area behind the bus and areas close to the sides and front of the bus where the driver CANNOT SEE YOU!

**THE BUS STOP** is an extension of the bus and all bus rules will apply.

**THE BUS** is an extension of school and all school rules apply as well as the rules outlined in this handbook.

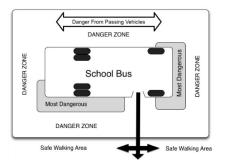
**DRESS APPROPRIATELY** for the weather and for times of poor visibility, such as fog, rain and darkness. Remember buses occasionally run late and aren't always as warm as your house or car, so wear warm clothes.

**FOR SAFETY OF STUDENTS,** once the buses begin to depart the school in the afternoon, late students **will not** be allowed to board unless the driver is notified by the school office.

**PARENTS, DO NOT "CHASE" BUSES** to the next stop if your child misses the bus at your stop. Children running alongside the bus constitute a grave safety violation.

#### WE CARE ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN!

# **DANGER ZONE**



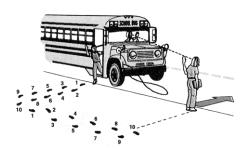
There are six Danger Zones surrounding a school bus. The danger zone is a 12 foot area around all sides of the bus. These are areas where students are not easily seen. In the past, the danger zone was described as 10 foot area. Current practice uses a 12 foot area.

Danger Zone areas are within 12 feet of the bus on all sides. However, there are particularly dangerous areas immediately in front of the bus and around the right rear of the bus. These are the areas that statistics show account for many student fatalities resulting from a student being hit by their own school bus.

# **GETTING OFF THE BUS**

Get off the bus in single file. Don't push or shove. Take at least 12 giant steps away from the bus. This is about 12 feet.

Stop, listen. Look left, right, and left again. **Take 12 Giant Steps away from the bus.** Stay away from the bus as you head for home.



If you have to cross the road, cross in front of the bus, and remember these things:

- 1. Make sure the driver sees you and you see him or her.
- 2. Take 12 Giant Steps ahead of the bus.
- 3. Wait for the driver to signal you when it is safe to cross.
- 4. To be sure that it is safe, look left, right and left again before crossing.

### **NEVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS!**

# **TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS**

In order for our buses ("classrooms on wheels") to be a safe environment for our children, the drivers ask for your help.

# **PLEASE DO NOT SEND HOME CERTAIN ITEMS** with students or ask them to bring them on the bus. These include:

Glass

Inflated Balloons

Toothpicks or Sharp, Pointy items

Sticks

Baseball Bats (unless in an approved bag)

Animals or Critters of any kind (except small stuffed ones)

Projects or Items too large to fit on lap. (Bus aisles need to be free at all times.)

HEAVY, SHARP, BULKY, OR OTHER ARTICLES THAT MAY
BE HAZARDOUS IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT OR
EMERGENCY STOP, INCLUDING SOME KINDS OF MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS. REFER TO PAGE 16 OF THIS HANDBOOK.

Some PROJECTS are messy (for example glitter & plants in dirt). Please provide sealed bags for students to bring these items on the bus.

Please keep watch on CLASSROOM SUPPLIES being taken home; paper clips and rubber bands often become weapons on the bus.

Students are not to EAT or DRINK on the buses, so any treats given them in class must be finished before bell time.

LOADING takes time in the afternoon and the buses need to pull out of the school lot on time. Please dismiss students <u>on time</u> so they will be able to load comfortably and avoid missing their bus or delaying others.

Please identify yourself to the driver before boarding the bus.

#### THANK YOU!

# SCHOOL BUS RIDING REGULATIONS

- 1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and passengers. Passengers must obey the driver promptly and willingly.
- 2. Students shall ride their regularly assigned bus at all times unless permission has been granted by school authorities based on a note or phone call received from the parent/guardian. (Please include in the note the name, address and phone number of where your child is going.) Present the note to the driver upon entering the bus.
- 3. Students shall be permitted to leave the bus only at their regular stop, unless written permission has been granted by the school principal. Students shall enter and leave the bus in an orderly fashion.
- 4. Each student may be assigned to a seat in which he/she will be seated at all times unless permission to change is given by the driver.
- 5. Students shall not throw anything out windows, put any part of the body out of windows, and are to assist in keeping waste off the floor.
- Students are to remain in their seats. Students must sit facing the front of the bus, keep their hands and feet to themselves, and keep their voice levels moderated.
- 7. Students must not have sticks, breakable containers, any type of firearms or straps & pins extending from clothing. Except for service dogs, no animal (reptile, fish, insect or fowl) is permitted on the bus.
- 8. When the bus stops at a railroad crossing, there will be <u>ABSOLUTELY NO NOISE OR TALKING</u> until the bus is completely across the tracks.
- 9. Students must look both ways before crossing a roadway. <u>ALWAYS CROSS IN FRONT OF THE BUS IN FULL VIEW OF THE DRIVER AND ONLY WHEN THE DRIVER GIVES THE SIGNAL TO CROSS.</u> Students must be in full view of the driver at all times.
- 10. Students shall be on time. Bus policy is to be at the stop **FIVE MINUTES** early and wait in an orderly manner. Bus drivers are instructed not to wait for tardy students.
- 11. Any damage to a bus shall be reported to the driver at once.
- 12. No large, bulky items that can't easily fit on the student's lap or between the student's legs, or items that may break, cause injury to others, or distract the driver will be allowed on the bus.

# REGULATIONS CONTINUED

- 13. Small CD's, iPod's, MP3, radios, or tape players with headsets may be used as long as the sound does not disturb others.
- 14. Headsets must be removed when boarding the bus and upon departure from the bus. Students may not wear headsets when crossing the road.
- 15. Students are discouraged from bringing items of value or of sentimental significance onto the bus as their safety and integrity is not guaranteed.
- 16. Cell phone use is discouraged. Ringers must be left off.
- 17. Students may not open the windows without permission from the driver.
- 18. Unnecessary talking to the driver while the bus is in motion is prohibited.
- When the bus is arriving or departing, students shall stand clear of the bus a minimum of six feet.
- 20. Private and school property at bus stops shall be respected at all times.
- 21. Students shall not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- 22. For safety reasons, no student will be allowed to board or leave a bus once the buses begin to leave the school grounds unless permission is given by the Transportation Department.
- 23. Musical drumsticks must be stored away securely.
- 24. Loose items such as baseballs, basketballs, soccer balls, etc. will not be permitted on the bus unless they are placed inside a sports bag.
- 25. Keep aisle clear at all times.
- 26. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum.
- 27. Use of perfume, cologne, body spray, etc., is prohibited on a bus.
- 28. Students may not bring toy guns or squirt guns on the bus.
- 29. Paint balls are not allowed on the bus.
- 30. A parent/guardian or older sibling must be at the bus stop to receive kinders.

# **UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS**

The following items are not allowed on the bus. We are unable to list all items that may be dangerous to students to transport, so if you have a concern about an item that is not listed, feel free to call the Transportation office at (360) 458-3300 and we will let you know whether or not the item is allowed.

If an item cannot sit on the child's lap or between their legs on the floor it is <u>not</u> an approved item per the Washington State Patrol (items cannot be stored in empty seats, in the aisle, or under seats). We appreciate your support on this matter.

#### Items Not Allowed on the Bus:

Skate boards (unless in an approved carry-on bag)

Live animals or critters

Toy swords or guns

Laser lights

Fireworks

Fishing poles

Kites

Baseball bats (unless in an approved carry-on bag)

Large bouncing balls (unless in a sack)

Glass

Inflated balloons

Pepper spray

Perfume, cologne, body spray, etc.

Tobacco products including vape pens and e-cigarettes

Drugs, alcohol, paraphernalia

Aerosol cans

Flowers

## **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS**

The following behaviors are not acceptable and may result in an automatic five (5) school day suspension of bus-riding privileges. Subsequent violations may result in extended suspension of bus riding privileges.

Noncompliance to driver's directions

Profane/rude/abusive language or gestures

Possession/use of alcohol or drugs

Smoking or use of any tobacco product, i.e. vape pens and e-cigarettes

Use of sparking device, i.e. lighters, flint

Use of fireworks, cap guns, "poppers," or pepper spray, stink bombs

Use of laser light or flash units

Grossly excessive noise or loud behavior

Harassment/bullying or threatening harm to others

Excessive horseplay

Spraying perfumes, colognes or any other type of fragranced item due to possible allergic reaction

Impeding drivers from safely accomplishing their duties by giving incorrect directions

Withholding name when asked by driver or administrator

Giving false testimony or falsely accusing another student

Throwing any item while on the bus

Forging a teacher or parent name on any bus note

Spitting or shooting spit wads

Breaking a paint ball on the bus

Any student found to have vandalized, causing destruction or damage to district or student property

Theft

Fighting/Assault

Anyone caught with a firearm may have a minimum 365-day suspension. Anyone caught making a bomb threat will have a minimum 365-day suspension.

# SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

#### **Student Discipline Process**

In the event it becomes necessary for a driver to discipline a student, the following procedures should occur:

- Remember proper discipline is not a form of punishment but a means to instruct and help in correcting a student's behavior that is not in compliance with the rules and regulations set forth by transportation/district policy. Discipline should always be handled in a fair and just way and not performed with anger.
- Always verbally try to work with the student in order to bring about acceptable behavior. Cite the problem, explain that what they are doing is unsafe and not acceptable and note the consequences if the problem continues.

#### **Prior To Written Procedures:**

If the student continues to misbehave, the driver will notify the parent/guardian of the problem, seeking their help in the matter. This particular phone conversation will be documented noting the student's behavior, time and date of the phone call, and response of the parent/guardian. Notification to the parent/guardian will be given, stating that if the student continues to misbehave, it would be necessary to issue a written behavior notice. If in the event the driver is unable to reach a parent/guardian by phone, the driver may forward the completed behavior notice to the office for mailing. Under no circumstances will the driver make any contact or discuss any behavior or disciplinary action with a parent or guardian at a bus stop while students are on board.

#### STEP 1

(First Incident) Notice and phone call to parent/guardian 0-3 days exclusion from the bus

If a student continues to misbehave after being warned verbally and previous contact has been made either by phone or letter to the parent/guardian, the driver will then issue the first behavior notice, noting the infractions. Bypass of first phone call is permissible if and only if the infraction dictates and has administrative approval. After returning to the transportation department, the driver is then required to check off all regulations that have been violated on the reverse side of the discipline form. Clearly state what the student did, then sign (entire name) and date the behavior notice and turn it into the transportation office for processing.

After returning to garage, the driver is to follow up by phoning the parent/guardian regarding the behavior notice and document the date and time of the phone conversation in the (Official Use Only) box provided. The parent/guardian will be informed that if the student continues to misbehave another behavior notice will be issued, resulting in a three to five (3-5) school day exclusion of bus riding privileges.

#### STEP 2

(Second Incident) Exclusion from bus three to five (3-5) school days Requires Administrative Approval

Notice and Telephone Call to Parent/Guardian, Conference with Transportation Personnel, Driver, Parent/Guardian and Student

If it becomes necessary for a second behavior notice, the driver will follow the same steps as in step 1. Notify the parent/guardian by phone stating the infraction, that the student is being removed from the bus for three to five (3-5) school days, and that a conference will have to be held with parent/guardian and the student, along with the driver and the transportation department. This is classified as a temporary exclusion from bus riding privileges and a letter will be sent home noting the infraction and that a conference is requested to try to resolve the problem. The parent/guardian may sign the letter waiving the conference.

#### STEP 3

(Third Incident) Extended exclusion from bus Requires Administrative Approval

(K-4: 6-10 school days) (5-6: 10-15 school days) (7-12: 20 school days – remainder of school year)

Notice and Telephone Call to Parent/Guardian

If after a student has been temporarily excluded from the bus and the student continues to misbehave, the student will be issued a third behavior notice stating that the student is placed on Extended Exclusion from all bus riding privileges. The driver will also follow up with a telephone call to the parent/guardian stating the infraction and the terms of the exclusion.

Note: Length of the exclusion up to the remainder of the school year is based on grade level as stated above as well as the severity and frequency of the student's history of infractions. Suspensions may be reduced at the

discretion of the district administrators. A letter will also be sent home noting the terms of the exclusion encouraging the parent/guardian and student to come in for a conference to resolve future problems.

#### **Emergency Exclusion From Bus:**

Please Note: This is the only time a check mark is placed in the (Until Conference) box and can occur on either steps 1, 2 or 3.

In the event a student openly refuses to follow the driver's direction (School Bus Rules/Regulations), the student will be removed from all buses until participating in a parent/guardian, student, driver and transportation personnel conference, providing the driver *clearly stated* to the student that the student had the choice either to 1) follow the driver's directions, or 2) continue not to follow directions and be off the bus until conference.

Notice and Telephone Call to Parent/Guardian, Conference with Transportation Personnel, Driver, Parent/Guardian, and Student. Notification on behavior notice may be noted with any of the steps as per past documentation.

The Superintendent or designee and Transportation Director reserve the right to modify a student's bus exclusion based upon factors such as, but not limited to, grade level, special needs and/or other mitigating circumstances.

#### Removal of Past Behavior Notices:

If a student maintains appropriate bus behavior and receives no further behavior notices within three (3) months of the last behavior notice, the most recent behavior notice will be removed.

Reminder: After 3 months, the last behavior notice will be removed from the student's record. Example, if the student received a step 2 on October 10 and has had no other behavior problems until January 20, the student would receive a step 2 again. Please be sure to check records prior to issuing behavior notices in order to report accurately the number of days excluded from bus.

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# **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

Buses are designed for transporting students to and from school safely. Safety of students while on buses is a major concern of the district.

Heavy, sharp, bulky, and/or other articles which may be hazardous in the event of an accident or an emergency stop shall not be transported in the passenger area of any school bus. Specific attention is directed to items such as skis, ski poles, vaulting poles, musical instruments, riser platforms, etc."

WAC 392.145.015

The state law outlined above regarding heavy and bulky articles which may be hazardous in the event of an accident, is very specific as to what is and is not allowable on a school bus. Two very important items to consider are:

- 1. Whether the student can hold the instrument in his/her lap.
- 2. Whether the student can control his/her instrument while boarding the bus and walking down the aisle. Instruments must be held at waist level or below.

#### **ALLOWED**

Taking these two items into consideration, it has been determined the following instruments (or those of similar size) **WILL** be allowed on the school bus.

Clarinet, Coronet, Trumpet, Flute, Piccolo, Oboe, Trombone

#### Possible in Uncrowded Conditions

When buses are not at capacity and room allows, the following instruments **MAY** be allowed on the school bus. (*Check with the driver the day before.*)

Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Baritone, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, French Horn, Small Drum Kits, Tuba

#### **NOT ALLOWED**

The following instruments **WILL NOT** be allowed on the school bus unless on a designated band trip where special space has been set aside specifically for carrying instruments.

Bass Drums, Sousaphone, Keyboard, Amplifiers

# FIELD TRIPS/ACTIVITIES

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COACH/TEACHER/CHAPERONE:

Field trips and extracurricular activities provide a source of enhancement to daily school curriculum. Success of these programs depends on transportation and adequate chaperonage. The following rules apply to SCHOOL VANS as well as buses.

- Please provide 1 ADULT SUPERVISOR per 30 STUDENTS.
- Please ensure PERMISSION has been obtained for all students PRIOR to boarding.

The DRIVER'S primary responsibility on field trips is driving the bus. YOU are responsible for maintaining safe & appropriate student behavior to assure the driver is not distracted. "The bus driver shall have final authority and responsibility." (WAC 392-145-015) At the start of each field trip or extracurricular trip, the school bus driver shall review with all passengers, the location and use of the emergency exits and emergency equipment, and any district emergency procedures. (WAC 392-145-080 (6).

• Please seat ADULT SUPERVISORS throughout the bus (front, back & middle).

#### Please emphasize these RULES with your students:

- 1. Stay seated. Don't change seats while bus is moving.
- 2. The AISLE is to be kept free at all times (including legs and feet).
- 3. Keep NOISE to a minimum. (No yelling, loud noise or loud singing.) Quiet behavior is especially important to avoid distracting the driver.
- 4. EATING & DRINKING is allowed with PRIOR PERMISSION ONLY (no glass bottles). If the eating and drinking gets out of hand, the privilege will be taken away from the given sport or activity for the remainder of the season.
- ALL TRASH goes into trash container. Bus must be CLEANED at the end of the trip to the driver's satisfaction.
- NO CLEATS can be worn on bus. NO SHOES ALLOWED ON SEATS. Stow equipment safely.
- 7. WINDOWS may be lowered to the marked point. All parts of body must stay inside the bus. Nothing is to be put in or out of window.
- 8. NO LARGE RADIOS OR BREAKABLE CONTAINERS will be allowed on the bus. Small iPods, MP3 players, CD players, etc. WITH HEADSETS are acceptable as long as the sound does not disturb others.
- 9. When the bus stops at a RAILROAD CROSSING, there will be ABSOLUTELY NO NOISE OR TALKING until the bus clears the tracks.
- 10. Unless permission is granted by the COACH or CHAPERONES, students must return on the bus to the school where they boarded. Permission is only granted to return with parents or guardians upon receipt of WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION or PERSONAL CONTACT with the parent or guardian. The coach or chaperone is required to keep track of their students.

# **SNOW SCHEDULES**

In the interest of safety for our bus riding students, the following route changes will be in effect when it is announced the buses are running on winter snow schedules.

Buses may be running a few minutes late due to road conditions. Pickups will be made unless there are announcements to the contrary. If it is announced that school is starting one or two hours late, please remember that BUS PICKUPS WILL ALSO BE ONE or TWO HOURS LATER THAN NORMAL.

Should it become necessary for time changes or a limited bus schedule, announcements will be through our automatic calling system, at www.flashalert. net, on our district website and on any of the media outlets listed below beginning at 5:30 a.m. if possible.

KPLU	88.5 FM	KGTK	920 AM
<b>KMPS</b>	94.1 FM	KOMO	1000 AM
KXXO	96.1 FM	KGY	1240 AM
KGY	96.9 FM	KITZ	1400 AM
KBSG	97.3 FM		
KRWM	106.9 FM		

KOMO TV (4) KING TV (5) / KONG (6) KIRO TV (7) KCPQ TV (13)

The stations listed above were accurate at the time of printing but are subject to change. Current information is listed on the district website at www.ycs.wednet.edu. You can subscribe to receive alert messages directly to your email or cell phone by going to FlashAlert.net

Parents and students are requested not to call the radio stations, schools, or the transportation office unless absolutely necessary.

# **DIRECTORY**

TRANSPORTATION OFFICE	458-3300
FAX	458-4052
DISTRICT OFFICE	458-1900
YELM HIGH SCHOOL	458-7777
YELM EXTENSION SCHOOL	458-2002
RIDGELINE MIDDLE SCHOOL	458-1100
YELM MIDDLE SCHOOL	458-3600
FORT STEVENS ELEMENTARY	458-4800
LACKAMAS ELEMENTARY	894-6000
MCKENNA ELEMENTARY	458-2400
MILL POND ELEMENTARY	458-3400
PRAIRIE ELEMENTARY	458-3700
SOUTHWORTH ELEMENTARY	458-2500

Yelm Community Schools does not discriminate in any programs, activities, or employment opportunities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability and provides equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX/State Law Coordinator (RCW 28A.640/28A.642) - Director of Human Resources; Section 504/ADA Coordinator – Assistant Director of Special Services, PO Box 476, Yelm, WA 98597. Phone: (360) 458-1900.