

## Johnston County Schools



## Because We Care

**Purpose:** Johnston County Schools has suffered the highest number of driving related teen fatalities in the state of North Carolina. To ensure safe driving practices for our students, Johnston County Schools will approach this issue through a three part program: Education, Enforcement, and Public Relations.

### Education – Driver’s Education Program

The Johnston County Schools Driver’s Education Program will be presented in accordance with guidelines set forth by N.C. General Statute. There will be two parts of the instruction: Classroom Instruction and Behind-The-Wheel Instruction.

### Eligible Students

Any ninth grade (9<sup>th</sup>) high school student age fourteen and a half (14 ½) years old or older may enroll in Driver Education. Current eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grade students will be eligible to enroll in summer classes between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade if he/she meets the age requirement and “adequate academic progress”.

Non-public education students must provide proof of age and grade requirements.

### Classroom Instruction

The classroom instruction consists of thirty-three (33) hours of instruction. Prior to the start date of any class, a mandatory evening meeting will be held for students planning to enroll in the class. The parent/legal guardian(s) are required to attend this meeting before the student will be allowed to proceed in the class. The parent/student meeting will take place at 6:30 PM on the Thursday evening prior to the start of class on Monday. (Location TBA). The parents and students will be provided valuable information at this meeting dealing with the following topics:

- NC Highway Patrol
  - NC State Highway Patrol Parent /Teen Driving Agreement
- Driver Education Instructor
  - Restricted Instruction Permit
  - Student/Parent Driving Guide (Parental Involvement Program)
  - Student Expectations
- Parent Presentations
  - Dangers of unsafe driving

**Mandatory Parent Meeting** - All parent or legal guardians will be required to attend a mandatory meeting with their students prior to taking the driver’s education course. They will be provided information on

traffic laws, graduated driver's license and statistics on teen driving. During this meeting, the Parent/Teen Driving Agreement will be signed in accordance with the **"Driving to Live"** program sponsored by Crime Control and the Public Safety Division of the North Carolina State Highway Patrol. This contract heightens the awareness of seat belt usage, aggressive driving, speeding, avoiding distractions, and the dangers associated with drinking and driving.

The remaining thirty-one and a half (31 ½) hours of classroom will start after school dismissal on scheduled class dates. Representatives from local law enforcement agencies and the DMV Traffic Safety team will make presentations to the class.

Finally, Johnston County Schools will work with local town leaders to offer the **"Alive at 25"** course to our teen drivers.

### **Behind the Wheel Instruction (BTW)**

BTW instruction will occur after the completion of the Driver Education class. BTW instruction will include of a minimum of six (6) hours of actual driving time. Skills taught are included in the Student/Parent Driving Guide and parents are encouraged to understand and reinforce those skills with their students. BTW instruction will take place afternoons after school, on Saturdays, and possibly teacher workdays and holidays during the regular school year. Driving during the summer schedule may occur on Monday – Saturday. All BTW instruction will take place during daylight hours. No night driving will be done.

Additionally, students must attend the defensive driving class (4 hours) taught by Johnston Community College prior to purchasing a student parking pass at their perspective high school. The defensive driving course will also be incorporated in the curriculum of the driver's education program

### **Enforcement**

**RU Buckled Program** - Simultaneously, the "RU Buckled" program will be established at each of our high schools. Students who are driving a vehicle without being buckled while on campus will be in jeopardy of losing their driving privileges. Students will lose their driving privileges for one week on the second violation. The third violation will result in the loss of driving privileges for the remainder of the school year.



### **Law Enforcement Patrol**

Realizing that teen fatalities occur between 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm, the Johnston County Safe Team (Johnston County Sheriff's Department) enforces safe driving practices after certain school events such as athletic practices, ball games, etc.

### **Public Information**

It is imperative that we reach all stakeholders in this campaign: parents, students, and grandparents. Therefore, we will be using a multi-generational media approach to reach these audiences.

**JCS Website “Because We Care...Teen Driving” Page** – For easy access to information, the technology department will put a button on the front page. Also, the bottom half of the front page will be devoted to safe driving awareness visuals. The “Because We Care...Teen Driving” page will contain information regarding the Graduated License Law, Parent Teen Agreement Letter, Tips for Safe Driving, Quick Facts for Parents, Parents Sharing Their Stories, Podcasts for Teen Safety, and Driving Privileges/Enforcement Strategies.

**Connect Ed – Safety Briefings for Parents and Teen Drivers** – Before major events such as ballgames, dances, proms, holidays, etc., Connect Ed will be utilized to remind parents and their teen drivers to be cautious since the majority of fatalities occur before or after major student events. These messages will be designed to remind parents and students of their safe driving responsibilities. The following key figures will deliver these phone messages: Dr. Parker, high school principals, middle school principals, peers who have lost friends, student leaders (SGA, SADD, etc.), parents, teachers, and other key figures.

**Local Radio Spots** – To reach parents and grandparents, these spots will be announced by Employees of the Year, principals, and other key figures. These spots will provide the facts about teen driving, remind parents of their responsibilities, and suggest strategies to ensure the safety of our teens.

**Because We Care Billboards** – To maintain the focus of the majority of targeted audiences, billboard designs (that will also be recycled for use on the JCS website) will be utilized to remind parents, grandparents, and students of the facts regarding teen driving. These designs are as follows:

- Will You Make it to Graduation?
- No More than One Under 21 (Graduated License Requirements)
- SLO Down and Save a Life (S-Saving L-Loved O-Ones)
- Text Message Lingo for being a safe driver
- As a Student, I Care...
- Steering Them in the Right Direction series – quick facts about teen driving

**Parents Who Care** – Parents who have suffered the tragic loss of a child in a teen related driving incident will speak to parent and student groups during mandatory driver’s education meetings, before major school events (proms, Homecoming events, ballgames, holidays), and to civic groups such as Rotary.

**School Based Briefing Scripts** – To be used by teachers and principals at the end of the day before a major school event. These scripts will serve as a reminder to teens that our schools care about their safety and provide support for ensuring a safe weekend, event, or holiday.

**“As a Student, I Care”** – Student Leaders in Student Government, SADD clubs, and students in high school Mass Communications classes will design, produce, and distribute the following items to continuously remind teen drivers of their responsibilities:

- Brochures about teen driving
- Flyers to be placed on student car windshields during events
- Podcasts for safe driving
- Bumper Sticker Design Contest
- Give-a-Ways at Events (windshield stickers, footballs, basketballs)

**Because We Care...Mandatory Parent Meeting Materials** – Parents will receive the following information and materials as tools to equip them for supporting teen driving safety:

- Program Brochure (Education, Enforcement, Awareness)
- Parent Speakers
- Video, “Steering Them in the Right Direction” Tips for Parents
- “Because We Care” Key Chains
- “As a Student, I Care” Bracelet