



Thank you for enrolling your student in our Traffic Safety Education and Financial Literacy class. Our goal is to provide quality driver and financial education to help our students become responsible citizens.

**Traffic Safety Education  
Bellingham Public Schools  
Course Expectations and Consent Document**

**Class Enrollment:**

- The course begins with a required parent/student orientation.
- Course enrollment is handled through your class scheduling procedures at your individual high school. (Or school within your residential service area – for Running Start, home school, and private school students.)
- You must be 15 years of age or older on or before the first day of the TSE class.
- If you take the financial course first, you will need to be age 15 by the first day of the second nine-week session of traffic safety.

**Class Commitment Considerations:**

- Please do not enroll in this course if co-curricular, family events, family vacations, community involvement, etc. will not allow you to be in class for each class session and complete the drive lessons by the end of the scheduled course. By law, attendance for each class session is mandatory. Only two absences are allowed, and the time must be made up immediately (after school, or potentially with another arrangement).
- Please consider your parent's/guardian's schedule since home-practice driving is required.
- The State Department of Licensing (DOL) requires at least 50 hours of home practice driving before applying for your license. Bellingham Public Schools requires at least 12 hours of that home-driving practice to be accomplished while you are enrolled in this course to support your progress and success in the course.
- Parents: Please consider if your student is ready for the responsibilities that come with driving.
- Students must obtain their instruction permit no later than seven days after the start of class through an online application process on the DOL website. If you are 15 ½, you may obtain the permit early, but must take the knowledge test first. You may waive that requirement if you apply for a waiver through our TSE program. Students who are not yet 15 will not need to take the knowledge test but can't apply for the instruction permit until 10 days prior to the start date for the class you are enrolled in.
- Students **MUST** hold their permit for six-months before they can apply for their license. They must have reached their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and obtained at least 50 hours of home practice which should be recorded in a logbook we will provide.



### **Student Expectations:**

- Students will be held to a behavioral code of conduct.
- This is a performance-based program. Students must attend all classroom sessions and complete all course requirements before course completion can be reported to the Department of Licensing.
- ALL classroom assignments, assigned work, and completed tests/quizzes must be passed with a minimum of 80% for the student to receive completion.
- If you fail a unit concept test, you will need to retake a similar test within one to two class periods (without getting behind on current content and concepts).
- Students are expected to complete their drives within the start and finish dates of the session. Exceptions due to unforeseen circumstances must be communicated and documented.
- Students are to be on time for each scheduled drive session and possess their driving permit. Arriving without a driving permit will be cause for not driving and will result in a missed drive.
- If a student needs to miss a drive, the driving instructor must be notified no less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled drive time.

### **Classroom attendance:**

- The number of class minutes that a student must accumulate is 1800 minutes (30 hours total). Since Bellingham Public Schools is imbedded within the school day in a nine-week session, we are just at 1800 minutes. Therefore, your regular attendance in this class period is critical (and determined by Washington state law).
  - If you miss a day, you must make up the exact minutes with the exact (or equivalent) instruction outside of this class period. This is so you don't miss significant concepts or standards. Important topics are covered and BPS takes attendance seriously.

### **Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) Expectations:**

- Students are required to pass six one-hour BTW drive lessons (six hours total).
- Drive lessons occur each day of the week, after school from 3:45 - 5:45 pm, and on Saturdays (times may vary).
- By law, a student can only complete one drive lesson on any given day.
- The BTW drives will begin the second week of the course and last for two hours each. Two students will be scheduled for each drive lesson session.
- BPS will not drive students on solo lessons. We have a strict no-show policy, because we must cancel the drive, or find a substitute student, if you fail to show for a drive lesson. Your no-show impacts another student and the instructor.
- No cell phones, electronic devices or backpacks will be allowed in the passenger compartment of the cars during the drives.
- No food or liquids (except water) will be allowed in the car during drives.

- Distractive behaviors while in the vehicle are not allowed and will be dealt with as a behavior violation.
- Students must arrive to their scheduled BTW drive lesson prepared, well-rested and alert or their drive can be cancelled and a rescheduling fee will be charged. You will be expected to attend the drive session in the back seat so that the other student can complete her/his drive.

### **Parental Expectations / Outside Practice:**

- Parents are the role model for their students and are encouraged to be actively involved in the process of them learning to drive. At present, the DOL requirements include the parent verifying fifty (50) hours of practice driving outside of the guided driving instruction that occurs within the class session. Ten (10) of those hours are to include night driving.
- We provide a logbook and a Parent-Teen Guide to assist you with this responsibility, as well as other support materials.
- Parents and students will be required to log at least 12 hours of home practice driving during this course.
- Parents will be required to sign verification of practice prescription forms that will be sent home with the student after each BTW drive lesson. It is expected that the student and parent will work on the prescribed issues before the next scheduled BTW lesson. The student is to come prepared to the next lesson with the signed prescription form.
- Insurance companies may or may not charge you for a student with a learner's permit. You do need to notify your auto insurance agent that you have a "permitted" driver in your household.

### **Tips for Parents:**

*(Disclaimer: these may be helpful suggestions but contain their own element of risk.)*

- While instructors have the security of an instructor brake on their side of the car, parents do not. Here are some actions you might need to take in the event of imminent danger:
- Your best safety net to prevent problems caused by a late or confused action of your student driver is to remain calm and to be very timely with clear directions. Give instructions well ahead of time. Do what we do. First say where, then say what. Example: "At the next intersection, turn right."
- Be ready to take control of the steering wheel with your left hand if needed. Be certain that you discuss this with your student prior to your in-car drive so that they know not to "freeze up," or resist giving you control of the steering wheel. It is important for students to be corrected by the parent/instructor so that they learn what they should/shouldn't do next time.

- If your gear shift is between the front seats, and you are at risk of an imminent collision, you may need to use an open-palm approach to hit the gear shift to neutral, and if possible, use the levered-parking brake to slow the car as well. If the gear shift is on the column then push it up and away. (You may want to practice so that if/when the time comes you will be ready to react and minimize the potential risk.)
- On a rare occasion, your student may need to quickly accelerate to get out of a risky situation. If you push your open palm on their right knee, the force will push the accelerator for a quick evasive maneuver.
- However, a student may freeze on the accelerator in a panic or hit the accelerator when s/he meant to hit the brake. The open-palm method to shift into neutral will solve that problem. Or, you can shut off the key, understanding that you will lose power steering and braking capacity. (The steering wheel will not lock unless the gear is shifted to park.)
- Monitoring traffic well ahead and all around is paramount. To help you monitor the rear, consider purchasing a rear-view mirror, and a student-eye-check mirror. We will inform you of options for acquiring these tools.
- Insurance companies and other vendors offer “student driver” signs that you can place on your vehicle.

#### **Pick-up / Drop-off:**

- It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to arrange for the student to be available at the start of the drive session at the school and to be picked up at the end of the drive session. Drive instructors may have other immediate commitments or scheduled drives after the session completion.
- The instructor cannot drop students off at any place other than where they started their BTW drive.

#### **Immediate Course Removal, Course Failure, and Repeating a Course:**

- It is understood that if a TSE student flagrantly disobeys the course instructor, they can be dropped from the class immediately. (A poor attitude will not be allowed behind the wheel.)
- Illegal use of a motor vehicle carries severe consequences. Students observed driving a personal vehicle without proper supervision (while enrolled in this course) will be dropped from the class immediately.
- Students may be dropped from this class if traffic violations are reported or observed by a traffic safety instructor.
- Any student reporting to class or their drive lesson who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (prescribed or illegal) will be immediately referred to the school administration and/or the police for evaluation.
- An absence due to suspension, expulsion or missing the class more than two times will require make up or a repeat of the course for completion. The student will need to design a plan with the TSE coordinator to make up missing work.



**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR TEACHER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:** By signing this document, I am verifying that I have read the BPS course expectations and consent document and agree to all the terms herein as it applies to the Traffic Safety Education Program.

Student Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_