

# **Twin State Driving Academy, Inc.**

## **Driver Education Student & Parent Handbook**

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## To Students

Welcome to our Driver Education class. This handbook will provide information about our program and serve to bridge the gap between you, the classroom, the in-car instructor and your parent/guardian in order to provide you with a positive learning experience.

This course cannot guarantee that you will be a good driver. Your personality, emotions, and attitudes play a vital role in the type of driver you will become. It is our job to help you acquire the skills to become a lifelong, low risk driver. Your commitment to excellence will directly affect your level of success.

*The mission of our Driver Education program is to provide the opportunity for all students to develop the knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and motor skills necessary to achieve low risk driving behaviors that will serve you for a lifetime of crash-free driving.*

## Curriculum

The curriculum used in this program is the NH approved curriculum changed to reflect the local environment. Way beyond Driver Education, this is a Risk Management/Risk Prevention program.

**Parents:** A successful driver education experience is a cooperative partnership of student, parents and instructors. You can assist by providing practice driving time at home and encourage your son/daughter to develop the skills, attitudes, and habits that will make him/her a low risk driver. You are not expected to replace the DE teacher, but rather to support, encourage, supplement, and assist in developing a low risk driver. Trust us, they are watching your habits and learning from you as well. Please don't model skills that kill.

# The State of Driver Ed in New Hampshire

In the State of NH, most school districts have made the choice to take driver education out of the scheduled day, and to pass the cost on to the student/ parent. In many states that is not the case, but most are moving to this model as budgets get tight and funding becomes difficult. Driving is expensive which makes Driver's Ed expensive.

Driver Ed is regulated by the Department of Safety, so many of the policies laid out in this handbook come from those rules and best practices guidelines.

The Saf-C 3100 administrative rules that govern the program have recently been updated by the State of NH so there may be some changes you weren't expecting if you have an older child/sibling who recently took Driver Ed.

## How Does it all Work?

In New Hampshire, the Driver Education program is designed as follows:

- There are 30 hours of classroom, 10 hours of behind the wheel instruction, and 6 hours of watching another student drive. This is called a 30-10-6 system.
- A student must be 15  $\frac{3}{4}$  by the first day of the class.
- A student should be comfortable with 'turning the wheel' of a car before coming to class, but does not need to be proficient.
- The intention is that a student will attend class (theory), drive with the instructor (lab portion), and then practice those skills with a parent (homework).
- Students need to pass the theory portion of the class as well as the final exam with an 80% or better grade.

**Driving Privilege:** Driving is a privilege. If a judgment is issued against your student resulting in a loss of that privilege, then they are ineligible to take Driver Ed.

## Registration

A student is considered registered for class when the following occurs: we receive the registration form, a photocopy of their birth certificate, \$150 deposit **and** a seat is available in the class requested. You can consider yourself enrolled when you receive an acknowledgement email. Send all correspondence snail mail to Twin State Driving, 37 Elm Street, Lebanon, NH 03766. While you may always call for information, we do not reserve spots by phone or online payments and waitlists do not carry over to other classes.

## Classroom Attendance

Students may not miss more than 4 hours of classroom time and **under no circumstances can a student miss the first class.** Per DMV rules, a student will be dropped from the class if they miss more than 4 hours. Any class time missed within the 4 hours will be made up with a packet of notes and activities. If you find yourself in a bind, PLEASE call Mrs. Cameron to discuss your issue. See FAQ's for more details. If you know you will miss the maximum time allowed before the class begins, you are not eligible for the class.

**Tardiness:** Students are expected to be in class on time as the State requires us to keep attendance records to the minute.

**Class Cancellations:** If High School classes are cancelled, all driver education is cancelled. If the school announces that all after school activities are cancelled, that includes classroom and/or in car driving. If the weather gets bad during the school day, your driving instructor may cancel the behind the wheel lessons, at their discretion.

## Driving Schedules

**In-Car Lessons:** Driving schedules are set up and distributed at the beginning of the class based on the information you've given us about your student's study halls, free periods and free time. Students need to notify their instructor if they cannot make a drive time with as much notice as possible. Weekend and evenings are not part of the regular schedule for drive times. Should your schedule change, please let us know as soon as possible.

**Observation:** Student have a requirement to observe another student driving for 6 hours before the end of Driver Ed. Students have the driving schedules of all instructors and it is up to them to complete this time at their convenience. It is recommended they observe at least once per week, and do not wait until the end of the session as the driving schedule is subject to unexpected changes. To encourage compliance, a \$20 fee per hour will be charged to students who procrastinate into the next session. Make a plan!

**Driving Standard:** While most students will always have the opportunity to continue to practice once the class is completed, once in a while, we encounter a student who gets to the end of the class clearly not ready to drive. A basic driving standard must be met in order to pass the class. The basic driving standard is defined as the ability to independently demonstrate:

- Smooth and safe operation of gas, brake and steering
- Knowledge and application of traffic laws
- Safe interaction with other motorists in moderate traffic

**Integrated Classroom and In-car Instruction:** This course is a 3-phase program; classroom, in-car and home-practice in the family vehicle. Concepts are first introduced in the classroom, then applied to an in-car lesson and finally put into practice in the family vehicle. As students progress through the class, concepts become more complex, building on and adding to previously learned concepts. Practice is crucial to student success. Please review the parent practice supporting documents, to help do your part!

**Impairment Policy:** Should we have any reason to believe that a student is not in a safe condition to drive a car, we reserve the right to cancel the drive. That can mean anything from exhaustion, drug or alcohol impairment, missing glasses, emotionally upset or a physical injury. Obviously, a student under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be removed from the class and reported to the school administration, resource officer or the local police.

## **Money**

**Course Fee:** The cost of the course is currently \$795 and is due two weeks before attending the first class session. An initial deposit of \$150 is required with your registration. For your convenience, there is a PayPal button on our website, **however it costs a few dollars more** to cover the fee. Recognizing that class is expensive, there is an option to pay half at the beginning of the class with the remaining due half way through class. Students will be allowed to complete half of their drives until the balance is paid.

Should a student ‘time out’ of class, for **any** reason, they will be allowed to come back to the next available class at a pro-rated fee of \$17 per hour of the 46 hour program. So, for example if a student timed out exactly ½ way through class the fee would be \$398. Where a student times out is important. If it’s late in the session it will cost a less amount than if they time out early. Manage time wisely.

Support for Driver Education has been removed from every budget from the local to the state level and left the burden entirely upon students and parents. We’re sorry too. Since NH doesn’t have a permit system and you don’t need special insurance for your student, it may be the cheapest year your student drives.

**Refund Policy:** You are entitled to a full refund of tuition, if we receive, in writing, a request two weeks prior to the start of the first class in which you are enrolled. **No refunds will be given after the first day of class.** If you find you cannot attend the class as expected, please give someone else the opportunity to attend, as

class sizes are limited and there is often a waiting list. In the situation of course failure, there are no refunds, and a student must pay the entire fee again in order to re-enroll into the next available driver education session, at the approval of the instructor.

**No Show & Late Fees:** Instructors have a very tight driving schedule. Please give an instructor notice that a student is unable to make a drive time with as much notice as possible. Last minute or 'no-show's will be charged a \$60.00 fee. No one wants more of your money. Please just give us the opportunity to replace the student with another as we will need to squeeze in an extra drive for your student.

## **Contact and Communication**

Please communicate any and all Driver Ed issues directly with Twin State Driving. Messages, notes, homework, registrations or tuition payments left at the High School very often do not make their way to instructors, and school personnel may not always be aware of the rules that govern Driver Ed, as we answer to many different agencies. The office phone has a 24/7 answering machine and phone calls are generally returned around lunch time or in the early evening. The office phone number is 448-5072. Recently students have been relying on others to explain how Drivers Ed works and not understanding that administrative rules and policies change from time to time. To avoid disappointment please talk to us, not others.

### **Please expect the following:**

- An acknowledgement email for your assigned class.
- A reminder email before the class begins.
- A progress report half way through the class if your student is struggling.
- A driving evaluation at the end of class if we have concerns.
- Phone calls if we have concerns at any time.



## Student Issues

**IEP/ 504 Students:** Please help us to set your student up for a successful experience and share accommodations required with the instructor with the registration process. A copy of the students IEP or 504, as well as a discussion of accommodations must occur with the instructor and the student's case manager, before the class begins, not when the student is struggling. Please be aware that this class is not meant to accommodate every student individual needs. Should we be concerned about our ability to teach your student appropriately, we may suggest, recommend or require the student be evaluated by a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist, as required by the State.

**Foreign Exchange Students:** Since most exchange programs do not allow a student to drive, foreign exchange students are not permitted to enroll in the class.

**Home Schooled Student:** Home schooled students who live in Lebanon follow the same enrollment procedures as High School students. Students from other school districts may be allowed to enroll as space permits.

**Busy Students Conflicts:** The program is 46 hours during a 6-10 week period, depending on the class, plus homework, driving, observation and parent practice. Please do not sign your student up when they do not have the time due to conflicts. We watch so many students struggle to juggle, school, extra-curricular activities, Driver's Ed and homework.

**Illness:** If your student is too sick to attend school, they are too sick for the classroom time. Please remember we need a note from a parent for the absence.

## Academics

**Exit Exams:** At the conclusion of each class, a competency quiz is given to assess student achievement over specific concepts from the texts, class discussions and activities. Students must achieve an 80% or better average in order to pass the class – the same standard as the DMV. It is a very attainable goal for those who are working at becoming safe drivers. Students must also achieve an 80% on the final exam.

**Progress Reports:** Instructors will make telephone calls and/or send progress reports home if it appears a student may need more support, and recommendations will be suggested to improve performance. If we have concerns regarding a student's driving an evaluation will be sent home after the last class.

**Course Completion:** Upon successful completion of classroom and in-car instruction, the student will receive a certificate of completion from the DE instructor. All classroom assignments, tests, and projects and books must be turned in and all tuition or fines paid by the last day of class. Checks written at the end of class must have 2 weeks to clear before certificates are given.

Every effort will be made to complete the in-car portion during the current classroom. However, occasionally students may run over the end of the class session, due to a variety of unforeseen events. Drive time is usually completed within a week of the last class date (no additional fees are charged for drive time).

All requirements of the class need to be completed within 6 months of the last class attended.

**In-Car Camera:** Twin State Driving has in-car cameras installed in the Driver Education cars for a record of the drive and for everyone's safety.

## The Negative Stuff

**Course Failure:** Not all students pass Driver Ed. Should your student fail, they may be allowed to retake the class, at the regular fee, when class space allows with the approval of the instructor. Should a student miss too much time from class, the course must be picked up again and completed within 6 months. If that is not possible then the student will need to repeat the class.

**Student Conduct:** Responsibility plays an important role in this course. Students are expected to behave in class and in the car with appropriate respect for themselves, their fellow students and the teachers. Disruptive, inattentive, non-participating, or students not doing timely homework will not be tolerated, and they will be removed from class. Whether a student meets the expectations will be strictly his/her decision. Additionally, each student driver must be prepared to accept the responsibilities and consequences for that choice.

**Failing school:** If your student is failing 2 or more regular High School classes, please do not sign them up for Driver Ed. Occasionally the school will not allow a student to drive when they are failing classes until they get their grades up. Their driving would then be suspended and resumed with the school's permission. This policy is similar to losing your opportunity to play a sport when you have failing grade.

**Removal from the Driver Education Program:** Students will be dropped from the program with a "Fail" grade for the following:

1. Excessive tardiness
2. Excessive or unexcused absences
3. Failure to complete assigned work
4. Cheating (whether sharing or receiving answers)
5. Being under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal drugs during any of the instructional phases
6. Suspension from school
7. Misuse of Driver Education Equipment
8. Willful violation or refusal to learn traffic laws

## Parent Practice

In the State of NH, driver education is intended to be a partnership between the teen, the parents and the driver educator. NH Driver Education Teachers Association is pleased to give your student “The Parent’s Supervised Driving Program’ booklet on the first class. It is a valuable resource for practice time and a reminder of the variety of experiences your student needs.

Your teen does not need to come to class with their 40 hours of parent practice completed, but please don’t send us a student who isn’t at least a comfortable with the gas, brake and steering in quiet environments.

During this program we will be stressing the following important concepts:

- Risk Management
- Zone Control
- Defensive Driving
- Be Pro-active not Re-active
- ‘Big-Picture’ Driving
- Share the Roads – Respectfully
- Control your emotions – and your speed
- New Technology and Techniques
- Steering Wheel hand positions of 9 and 3
- Lights on – Always
- Left turns make you a Loser
- Becoming a safe and competent driver takes YEARS not 40 hours.

The State’s rules about driving, 30 hours of classroom time, 10 hours of driving with an instructor, 6 hours of observation, 40 hours of parent practice is the minimum required to obtain a license. Your student then will receive a Graduated Driving License that has restrictions. Turning a teen into a safe driver is ALL about seat time and exposure to unfamiliar roads. The more driving they do the better driver they have the potential to become.

## Parents Tip Sheet

So, your child has turned 15 ½, you've found a photocopy of their birth certificate to keep in your car to prove it, and they're itching to get started driving. Nervous??? Here are some ideas to help keep the two of you safe as you get started.

**Rear view mirror.** Purchase an extra rear view mirror at almost any auto parts store for about \$15 and use zip straps or big rubber bands to secure it to the top side of your sun visor. Remove it when you're comfortable with your young drivers' skills. It's nice to be able to see all around your car, before they have acquired that important skill.

**Neutral!!** If your student hits the gas, instead of the brake, pop your gear shift into neutral to stop the car from lurching forward.

**The Steering Wheel:** Agree with your student to not fight you over the wheel if you feel compelled to adjust their road position.

**Communication:** There are resources on the internet to purchase signs for your car. "Student Driver" or "Newly Licensed Driver". They are fairly inexpensive. Or, simply make your own and put them in your windows. Also, do not be afraid to use your emergency flashers if you get in a bit over your head. Other drivers may give you the room and time you need to recover or pull over safely.

**Safe Plan of Progression:** Our time with your student is structured to start in small and safe environments and move them to more difficult ones as their skills progress. Start with parking lots, quiet neighborhoods, rural roads, a bit of traffic, and so forth. The Lebanon green, the Interstate, the 12A shopping area, rush hour traffic and downtown Hanover come later on in the lessons.

**Attitude!** An agreement with your eager student to leave attitudes and arguments at home! It is very difficult to move yourself into the vulnerable position of the passenger seat, after being responsible for the family safety for many years. It's also tough on the eager student as well.

## The Drive Routes

Driving Instructors have planned drive routes to teach your student how to drive. They are designed to include as many driving experiences as possible, in a safe progression from simple skills to as complex as we can find. We are extremely grateful to be able to teach in the Upper Valley, as we have colleagues who work in corners of this state who drive 20 minutes to get to a stop light. One stop light! Make sure your student gets a variety of driving experiences, not the same routes all the time.

The following is a summary of the driving progression we use. A student needs to reasonably master each lesson in order to progress to the next.

Students who drive during a study hall, will drive 12 – 50 minute sessions and students who drive after school will drive 10 – 60 minute sessions. The following lessons are a guide only. Depending on the student's level of skill, comfort or desire to get to something sooner rather than later, parking or the interstate for example, we may mix these up a bit to satisfy their individual needs.

Drive #1 Introduction – An overview of the car and review of basic driving skills in a low key environment. Turning the wheel, turning corners, appropriate use of gas and brake.

Drive #2 Rural Roads – Lane and speed management on hills and curves.

Drive #3 Rural Roads again, often with a touch of Hanover.

**Should a student be struggling or not progressing at this point, we may need to repeat lessons 1 to 3 until they are ready to move into traffic. The main measure of progression is when the student can turn the wheel of the car, control the gas and brake, be predictable around others on the road, and respond timely and correctly to direction from the instructor.**

Drive #4 Hanover lefts and lights – Traffic lights, traffic, protected and unprotected lights, right of way, right on red, becoming predictable in traffic.

Drive # 5 Hanover again – add traffic roundabouts and Hanover quirks.

Drive #6 Parking – Parallel, backing, perpendicular and angle. We'll teach your student how to park, but generally will not practice a lot. Your student needs to be able to park your car, not so much ours.

Drive # 7 Plazas and Route 12A – Multilane and heavy traffic

Drive # 8 Lebanon Green – The quirks of downtown as well as hill starts and speed tables.

Drive #9 Interstates

**Should your student drive 10 – 1 hour sessions the following drives are combined into one.**

Drive #10 – General Review Drive – less coaching

Drive # 11 – Mock DMV driving Test

Drive # 12 – Student Driven Review

**Practice time:**

Occasionally we encounter a student who doesn't have a practice partner, or parents who – for whatever reason – can't drive with their teenager. If your family is in this position, you are welcome to sign up for Driver Ed, but please know that your student may not pass the driving standard at the end of the class, and may need to repeat the class. Should your student's skills not progress, we may require a number of practice hours with an adult before we can finish the behind the wheel portion of the class.

A good general rule for when your student is ‘license ready’ is when you can take them to a new town and they are comfortable, making good decisions, aren’t making you nervous and you don’t feel the need to ‘coach’ anymore.

Instructors have many strategies available to help a student through the process of becoming a safe driver. A student may have assigned practice homework, for example. They may be required to drive a certain number of hours before a next lesson can occur. The process may slow down, sometimes significantly, to give a student’s skills time to catch up before the next lesson. Drive time is a progression of experiences that increases in difficulty. A student who isn’t ready for the next step is a safety issue for all. The goal is a safe driver, not how quickly can Driver Ed be accomplished.

### **Practice logs:**

The state requires you practice with student for 40 hours before you apply for a driver license. The following pages give you a place to make notes about those drives, but the state requires DSMV form 509 in order to record that time. A copy can be obtained from your classroom instructor or you can download it yourself from the DMV website at

[www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv/forms](http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv/forms).

Yes, you must fill it out completely in black or blue pen. Initial every line, 10 hours must be at night and truly in the dark. 5:30 may be a night drive in January, but not in June.

Driving time spent with an instructor is not part of the parent driving log.

Session topics may be the ‘drive title’ you are working on or fill in the type of driving you practiced: parking, interstates, rural roads, city driving, night driving etc.



## Home Driving Log

Use this log to keep track of your behind-the-wheel practice. This program requires a minimum of 40 hours of guided practice with a parent or guardian including 10 hours of night driving.

Date	Session Topic	Start Time	End Time	Hours Exp.	Cumulative Hours	Driver Initials	Adult's Initials

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						*	

**\*\*\*\* Skills to Concentrate on In-Car \*\*\*\***

- **SIGNS!!!!** Students often do not scan for signs as much as they should – and therefore miss a lot of important information. Often parents do not encourage looking for signs, because you are driving in very familiar areas.
- Targeting means your eyes should scan as far away as you can see (15 seconds), scan back through the zone you have control over (4-12 seconds), and then be prepared for most anything in the danger zone (within 4 seconds). Learning to drive this way results in less “all of a sudden” or “he came from nowhere” type accidents. Most drivers drive within 4 seconds of their car. Ask your student to explain this to you... we cover it extensively in car and class.
- You must practice – in order to become competent at:
  1. Constant peripheral vision scanning of the road side for movement – in order to see wildlife.
  2. Where are your “escape paths”. If something went wrong – right now – where is your safest escape path? If a car crossed the center line coming at you, where should you drive to avoid a collision?
- Play games – make it fun. “I Spy” as a game of “who sees the potentially dangerous situation first”. Keep track of points – loser buys the winner ice cream!
- Make a Deal – Earn Rewards! Your teens first 6 months of no tickets and no accidents – earns them a new phone, for example. It’s bribery yes, but cheaper than a new car!
- Give your student a vocabulary regarding driving. You cannot talk your student through a task until they have the ability to process the new terms, concepts and words you may be using, and many students need ‘processing time’. Build up to more difficult driving, please don’t start with it.

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