

Bus Rider's Safety Handbook

The goal of this Bus Rider's Handbook is to help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for students who ride the school buses. Parents should take time to read and discuss the materials in this handbook with their children. Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by the school district and should be treated as such. During bus rides, the driver has the same authority that a teacher has in the classroom. Riders are expected to respect this authority and to behave in such a way that the driver will not be distracted while operating the bus.

General Safety Rules

- Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time will a student act toward, or address comments to a bus driver in a disrespectful manner, or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
- Board and leave the bus at designated stops only.
- Only the students who are eligible to ride may be transported and must ride their assigned bus.
- Do not ask to ride home on another bus with a friend.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to school if a child misses the bus.
- Students will abide by the individual school's rules and regulations concerning bus students.

Bus Schedules

Buses will run as close as possible to the published schedule. However, the first several weeks of school are a period of adjustment. Routes will not run early, but may occasionally run late as route adjustments are made. Please keep this in mind when arranging personal schedules.

This year, we will not be able to accommodate day-to-day bus changes. We will accommodate different a.m. and p.m. requirements, but these must be the same everyday.

Procedures for Waiting for the Bus

- Be at your bus stop five minutes before schedule pick up time.
- Drivers will not pick up a student unless they are at their designated stop.
- If there are no sidewalks on your route to the bus stop, walk on the left side of the street or road, facing traffic. Stay as far off the road as possible.
- If you are walking with others where there are no sidewalks, walk single-file.

- Stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- When the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
- Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop.

Loading the Bus

- Do not push or shove.
- Use the handrail and steps.
- Go to your seat. The bus will not move until all students are seated.

Conduct on the Bus

- Remain seated while the bus is moving.
- Do not change seats.
- A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny others a place to sit.
- Each student will be expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until the bus door opens.
- Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition.
- Scuffling, fighting, and the use of obscene, vulgar, or profane language and gestures are forbidden.
- Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.
- Do not mark, cut, or scratch any part of the bus. Vandalism costs will be paid by the person who is responsible.
- The emergency door and exit controls should be used by pupils only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.
- Student shall never attempt to operate the passenger door or other driver controls except in cases of extreme emergency.
- Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip, and shall keep their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the bus aisle.
- Video recordings are made of student activity on the bus for disciplinary and training purposes. Because of student privacy issues, videos are not viewable by the public unless it is part of a student's permanent record. This policy is in effect to protect our total student population.

Getting off the Bus

- Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped.
- Use the handrail to take one step at a time when leaving the bus.

- Wait for your turn to leave the bus; pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
- Student will be released from the bus only at their designated bus stop.
- If any article drops or rolls near or under the bus, do not go after it. Go to the door of the bus and ask the driver for help.

Crossing the Street or a Highway

- All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 10 to 12 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal you that it is safe to cross.
- Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
- Never cross the road behind the bus.

Prohibited Items

- Live animals or insects.
- Glass containers.
- Tobacco in any form, alcoholic beverages, drugs or any controlled substance on the bus or at the bus stop for students or parents
- Weapons, explosives (such as fireworks), knives, water guns, or unsheathed pointed articles or any other object that could be considered dangerous or conflict with the safety of the students and the driver.
- Matches or cigarette lighters.
- Skateboards
- Glass containers
- Students will not eat on any school bus.

Suspension

- If a student is suspended from the bus for disciplinary reasons, that suspension excludes them from riding the bus during the time of suspension for any reason – including riding to and from school, field trips, extra-curricular activities and sporting events
- The District uses video cameras for safety purposes. Student behavior is recorded and viewed by District staff when necessary. Because of student privacy issues, videos are not viewable by the public unless it is part of a student permanent record. This policy is in effect to protect our total student population

Accidents or Emergencies

- Follow the driver's instructions.
- If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.
- The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
 - A. The student nearest the door will open the door and hold it open.
 - B. Leave the bus in a single file as quickly and quietly as possible.
 - C. Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
 - D. Once outside the bus, follow the driver's instructions completely.

Discipline

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. All the rules that apply in the classroom carry over on the bus. The Principal or Director of Transportation will administer discipline procedures with assistance from the bus driver. All school board policies that apply to student related activities apply on the school bus.

Determining Routes

We take in many factors when creating our bus routes. First and foremost is Student Safety. Below is a list of criteria that might help explain the creation of routes.

- Bus stops are generally located at corners or intersections. The designated area that students wait for the bus must be within a bus length to the corner (approximately 40 feet).
- Stopping at corners or intersections is safer due to the expectations of traffic. Students are generally taught to cross at corners, not mid-block. When a bus makes a mid-block stop it can confuse motorists, who generally anticipate that buses will make stops at corners or intersections. It also provides the driver, or a substitute driver, a landmark (intersection) to identify prior to making the stop so the eight-lamp system can be properly activated to warn the public. This also allows the driver to scan the area for students when approaching the intersection.
- District policy for distance to a bus stop from home can be up to 3-tenths of a mile for elementary students and up to 7-tenths of a mile for secondary students.
- School buses use the eight-light system and stop arm at all bus stops. In order to properly operate the eight-light system, no bus stop will be made within 300 feet of one another.
- Buses are not allowed to travel down cul-de-sacs or dead end streets. Backing a school bus is a very dangerous maneuver. A full-sized bus needs 115 feet to safely turn and most cul-de-sacs do not fit this criteria.

- Buses are not allowed on private roads.
- There is not a fixed number of students that warrants adding or moving a stop. Stops are determined on an individual basis.
- Visibility from the home to the bus stop is not part of the criteria for establishing a bus stop.
- A school bus driving by a home does not warrant adding or changing a stop. A high frequency of stops can make the motoring public impatient and cause drivers to drive around the bus causing greater safety concern than the distance a student has to walk to the bus stop. It also delays the bus, making the overall student time on the bus longer.
- Weather conditions are not part of the criteria for a bus stop change.
- School bus drivers do not have authority to change bus routes or student stops.