



## Transportation Department Parent Handbook and Bus Rules



### **Parents and Guardians:**

Please discuss these bus passenger rules and procedures with your child. Your child should appreciate the important part he/she plays in accomplishing SAFE and EFFICIENT district transportation.

Your child should understand that riding a school bus is a privilege conditioned on appropriate, safe, respectful behavior. Unruly conduct on the bus is a very real risk to the safe operation of a school bus.

Your cooperation in communicating this very important message would be most appreciated.

Garn Christensen, Superintendent

### **Bus Service Eligibility:**

All students are required to walk up to a one radius mile from their school. Bus service is provided beyond the one radius mile for all grades. Exceptions are made only when safety concerns are identified by the transportation office.

In order to change their normal bus and/or stop, students must obtain a pass from the school office.

## Enroute to Bus Stop:



Parents/guardians are encouraged to review their child's walking route to the bus stop, advising about safety concerns.

### Be Prompt:

Bus passengers should arrive at the bus stop no sooner or later than five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Buses will promptly depart all schools, ten minutes after dismissal times. For safety, once bus doors are closed, drivers will not stop for late arriving students.

## At the Bus Stop:



While waiting at the bus stop, students are expected to stand a safe distance from the street and avoid activities that could injure themselves or others. Students are expected to respect others' property. When the bus approaches, students must observe the instructions of the driver. This is particularly important in the winter when slick road conditions exist.

### Driver Authority:

The driver has full authority over the passengers on the bus. Seating assignments may be necessary to assure passenger safety. If inappropriate behavior is demonstrated by a student, the parent will be contacted to assist the student to modify the behavior of concern.

### Boarding/Departing Bus:

It may be necessary to cross the road to board the bus. Students are expected to observe the driver's instructions and always cross in front of the bus with the aid of the flashing stop sign lights and crossing arm.

### Passenger Conduct:

Safe, respectful conduct is expected of all passengers to insure safety:

- Obey the driver's instructions when first requested.
- Remain seated.
- Respect others and their property.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Keep noise level down.
- Cell phone use is limited to pre-boarding and post-departure.

Serious or persistent violations offensive to, or endangering the safety of others will result in progressive discipline. The age and experience of the student will help determine how many progressive steps are appropriate. Certain activities may result in immediate suspension from bus riding privileges. These include but are not limited to:

- fighting on the bus
- throwing objects in or out of the bus
- possession of dangerous weapons or articles
- destroying or defacing district or private property
- use of sparking devices
- smoking, or use/possession of drugs, alcohol or any form of tobacco
- obscene gestures or profanity directed at the bus driver or others
- any part of the body extended outside of the bus
- assault on a bus driver will result in indefinite suspension and possible criminal charges
- pointing a laser pointer at a bus driver will result in suspension from the bus and possible criminal charges

## Accidents/Breakdowns:

Bus drivers are thoroughly trained in defensive driving techniques and buses are carefully maintained. Yet, given the thousands of miles traveled annually, and the traffic conditions in our area, accidents and breakdowns can happen. All the buses have two-way radios and help can be just minutes away. One of the most important things to a bus driver in the event of an accident or breakdown is passenger cooperation.



## Snow Days:

Detailed emergency snow route information is distributed at the school. Local radio will provide up-to-date information each morning when the roads are slick and snowy. Ask driver in advance if your route could be affected and how.

## Items Not Allowed on the Bus:

For reasons of safety and health and in order to comply with state law and district policies, the following items are **not** allowed on a school bus:

1. Glass objects; bottles, jars, etc.
2. Open containers of food, drink, gum
3. Inflated balloons
4. Live animals, bugs, worms
5. Plants, dirt, other growing projects
6. Oversized objects and instruments; those that cannot fit safely in the seat with the student
7. Weapons; guns, knives, razor blades, etc. (real or toy)
8. Sports equipment which could endanger others; like javelins, pole vaults or shot puts
9. Skate boards and baseball bats
10. Any item which cannot be transported easily or which creates a safety concern
11. Distractive electronic devices such as Game Boys or CD players, or trading cards

Please arrange for alternative transportation if any of the above need to go to or from school.

## Student Discipline:



The district has adopted a progressive discipline policy which emphasizes logical consequences for inappropriate behavior. The written tool for this is the "Bus Conduct Notice". If warranted, your child will be issued a written notice for you to review and sign. It is required that the junior high and high school student have a signed notice **in order to board the bus** the day following receipt of the notice. If a notice is issued, the transportation director may attempt to call you to confirm and to answer any questions you may have. You may be asked to accompany your student for a conference with the driver and the transportation director.

Camera boxes are mounted in district buses. Cameras are randomly and/or selectively rotated through the buses. Student behavior may be monitored or observed from the video system. Parents may view a video concerning their student by contacting the transportation director.

Parents are encouraged to contact the Director any time they have concerns. If appropriate, a conference with other parties including the student and the driver may be arranged.

The District reserves the right to suspend transportation privileges for any student who demonstrates behavior unreasonably distracting to the driver which may contribute to unsafe operation.

Complete disciplinary procedures are distributed annually and are available at each school or the Transportation office.

**Disciplinary Procedures:**

When, in the opinion of the driver, a serious rule violation occurs, or when the driver's efforts to deal with less severe violations are unsuccessful, or a pattern seems to have developed, a school bus incident report will be initiated. The intent is to maintain good order and a safe environment for students riding buses to and from school or school sponsored activities, as well as to notify parents of the misconduct of their children. The following are standard actions that will generally be applied uniformly in response to documented incidents.

**Grades 5 - 12:**

- 1st Offense: Student counseled and warned by driver.
- 2nd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for two days. (If within 45 days)
- 3rd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for five days. (If within 45 days)
- 4th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for ten days or more, depending upon the nature or the offense. (If within 45 days)

The Transportation Director will determine the extent of the suspension.

**Grades Pre - 4**

- 1st / 2nd Offense: Student counseled and warned by driver.
- 3rd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for three days. (If within 45 days)
- 4th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for five days. (If within 45 days)
- 5th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for ten days or more, depending upon nature of the offense. (If within 45 days)

The Transportation Director will determine the extent of the suspension.

**Note:**

Serious offenses, such as fighting, flagrant displays of disrespect toward a driver, or possession of drugs or alcohol will result in immediate loss of bus privileges for a minimum of five (5) school days. Assault on a bus driver will result in indefinite suspension of bus riding privileges and possible criminal charges.

If a violation occurs more than 45 calendar days after a previous violation, the disciplinary action will be the same as for the previous offense. There may be some exceptions to these disciplinary actions in extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Transportation Director and the appropriate school principal. If a student is suspended for misconduct on any bus, the suspension will apply to all buses.