

BUS RIDER'S SAFETY MANUAL

PARENTS AND BUS RIDERS

The goal of this Safety Manual is to help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for children and adults who ride school buses. Parents should take time to read and discuss the materials in this manual with their children. Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by the school district and should be treated as such.

GENERAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RULES

1. Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time should a student be disrespectful or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
2. Board and leave the bus at designated stops only.
3. All students must ride their assigned bus.
4. Do not ask to ride home on another bus with a friend.
5. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to school if a child misses the bus.

PROCEDURES FOR WAITING FOR THE BUS

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes before scheduled pickup time. The driver will not wait or honk. Late students should not be running towards the bus.
2. Students should be no closer than 10 feet from the bus, which is called the "Danger Zone". Students must be in **plain sight** of the approaching bus driver and other traffic. Be watchful and don't play around.
3. **Before** the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
4. Stand still and stay clear of the bus. Move toward the bus **ONLY** after door opens and/or driver signals you to load.
5. If you miss the bus, go home immediately.
6. Parents should instruct their children on what procedures to follow if they miss the bus.

LOADING THE BUS

1. Do not push or shove.
2. Stay out of the bus "Danger Zone." Wait until the door opens or driver gives signal before approaching the bus.
3. Use the handrail and steps.
4. Go directly to your assigned seat. The bus will not move until all students are seated. Delays affect traffic and schedules.
5. Student seating arrangement will be assigned. Stay clear of the bus when the engine is started. Do not chase or hang onto the bus at any time. Stay out of the bus "Danger Zone." At campuses while loading in the afternoon, students will not be allowed to board a bus after the doors are closed without administrative approval.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS

Classroom dress code and conduct rules shall be followed. Students wearing gym clothes will not be allowed to ride the bus. Shoes must be worn while riding the bus.

1. Remain seated while the bus is moving.
2. Do not change seats.
3. A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another student a place to sit.
4. Normal conversation is permitted, but avoid making loud noises that may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition.
5. Scuffling, fighting and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language and gestures are forbidden.
6. Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.
7. Do not litter, mark, cut or scratch any part of the bus. Cost of damage will be charged for repair.
8. The emergency door and exit controls should be used by pupils only during supervised drills or actual bus evacuation.
9. Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door or other controls except in case of an emergency.
10. Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip, and shall keep their feet in front of them and out of the aisle.
11. All outerwear such as coats, jackets, and sweaters must be worn at all times or placed in a secure location such as a bag or backpack. In addition, no hoods from jackets, beanies, caps, etc. may be worn at any time while on the bus, for the purpose of being able to identify students if needed.

GETTING OFF THE BUS

1. Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped, brakes have been set and the door has been opened.
2. Use the handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus.
3. Wait for your turn to leave the bus. Pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
4. Stay clear of the bus at all times. Do not chase or hang onto the bus at any time. Stay out of the bus "Danger Zone." If crossing in front of the bus after exiting, students must wait for the drivers signal that it is safe before proceeding.
5. If an article drops or rolls near or under the bus, **do not go after it!** After the driver acknowledges and signals to you, only then should you go to the bus door and ask the driver for help.

DROPPING OFF PRE-KINDERGARTEN & KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

Parents or a designee must be at the bus stop to receive PK and K students.

AM Pre-K: If no one is there to receive the student, the student will be returned to campus. It is the responsibility of

the parent/guardian to see that students who are returned to campus are picked up.

PM Pre-K & K: P.M. Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten Students: If a parent or designee is not at the bus stop to receive the student, the student will be taken to the district's employee daycare, Gator Academy. A fee of \$20 will be assessed for each occurrence after the first return to Gator Academy. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to see that students who are taken to Gator Academy are picked up. Any student returned three times a semester will have their riding privileges suspended until a conference with the parents and transportation representative is held, an agreement is made and any charges are paid. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make an appointment with the Transportation Office. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the fourth time a three-day suspension from the bus may be issued after a conference is held and any charges are paid. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the fifth time a 5-day suspension from the bus may be issued after a conference is held and any charges are paid. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the sixth time, a one-month suspension or suspension for the remainder of the semester may be issued after a conference is held and any charges are paid. **Name(s) of persons eligible to receive student must be registered with the campus.**

DAYCARE FACILITIES

An employee representative should be waiting at the designated bus to receive students. If no one is there to receive the student(s), they will be returned to the campus or the Dickinson ISD Gator Academy. Any student(s) returned 3 times a semester will have their riding privileges suspended until a conference with the parents or daycare representative is held and an agreement is made. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the fourth time a 3-day suspension from the bus may be issued after a conference is held. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the fifth time a 5-day suspension from the bus may be issued after a conference is held. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the sixth time a 1 month suspension or suspension for the remainder of the semester/year may be issued after a conference is held.

DESIGNATED STOP/CHANGES

Students will be picked up and dropped off at the designated bus stop. Only one location for pick-up and one location for drop-off will be allowed. Any request for change must be made and approved by the Campus at which the student is enrolled. All requests must be made 2 days prior to needed change and must be for a minimum of 5 days. Changes to Student pick-up and drop-off locations can be made a maximum of two times per semester.

CELLULAR PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students will be allowed to possess cellular phones/electronic devices (i.e. iPods) while on the bus. These devices must not be heard. Phone conversations, taking pictures or videos are not permissible. If a cell phone /electronic device creates a distraction or disturbance to the driver, the request may be made to put the device away in a secure location or may be confiscated. Confiscated cellular phones/electronic devices will be returned to the student's parent or guardian only. **A \$15.00 administrative fee may be charged for this return. Unclaimed cellular phone or electronic devices will be disposed of after 30 days.** Lost or stolen phones/electronic devices are not the responsibility of Dickinson ISD, and no administrative effort will be spent in investigating lost or stolen phones/electronic devices.

CROSSING THE STREET OR HIGHWAY

1. All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 10 to 15 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal that is safe to cross. Be alert for the danger signal (Driver will honk horn) if the situation changes, and the driver detects a danger, look to the driver for instructions.
2. Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
3. Never cross the road **behind** the bus.
4. **CAUTION! Be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or unloading students.**
5. Obey all traffic signals and signs on your way to and from the bus stop.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

1. Tobacco and any smoking/vaping products.
2. Live animals or insects.
3. Glass containers.
4. Alcoholic beverages, harmful drugs or chemicals.
5. Weapons and explosive devices.
6. Any object (i.e. musical instrument, shop project) too large to be carried by the student. All other items must be kept on the student's lap or within the seating compartment and may not deny another student a seat.
7. Balls or Balloons
8. Skateboards
9. Matches and cigarette lighters.
10. Food and drinks other than water are prohibited from the bus.
11. Radios, tape players, headphones, CD players or any other electronic device that is too large to fit in a pocket or backpack.
12. Chewing gum.
13. Lasers or mirrors used to reflect light.

*The above list of prohibited items may not include all prohibited items. At the discretion of the Transportation Department, an item may be determined to be inappropriate or prohibited from the bus.

ACCIDENTS OR EMERGENCIES

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. If you must leave the bus, stay in a group. Move to a safe place.
3. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency:
 - a. The driver will make the decision on which exit to use during the evacuation.
 - b. Follow the driver's instructions completely.

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Field Trips

Educational field trips shall be provided when planned with a definite purpose and objective. Only school buses and principal-approved staff-driven SUV-type automobiles may be used for transportation. A signed permission from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each student participating is required for each field trip. (Forms are available in each school office.) The school must have on file a signed Emergency Medical Information Form. Please complete this form yearly and keep information up-to-date. All chaperones must complete a Criminal History Check form at least two (2) weeks prior to the field trip. NO EXCEPTIONS.

EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS

1. Bus riders' rules apply to all school-sponsored events.
2. Discipline will be the responsibility of the building principal, the sponsor and the driver.
3. The bus must return clean when returning from the trip.

DISCIPLINE

The school bus is an extension of the classroom and the Director or designee will administer discipline with assistance from the principal and the bus driver. All school board policies that apply to student conduct and other student-related activities apply to the school bus.

The following procedures shall be followed when discipline concerns arise on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. The driver shall attempt to correct the misbehavior of the passenger(s)
2. If the passenger refuses to comply with a reasonable request, the driver will report the incident to the Director or designee upon returning to the Transportation Department. The notification shall be made in the Bus Conduct computer program and parent contact will be attempted.
3. The Director or designee shall investigate the incident and notify the driver of the action taken.
4. The student will be given a copy of the report to take home for the parent's signature and return one copy to the driver.
5. A conference involving the Director or designee, the student(s), the driver and parent(s) may be necessary.
6. The Director or designee may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parent(s) or guardian and principal will be notified prior to the effective time of the suspension so that the parent/guardian can make other transportation arrangements.
7. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, any school official or law enforcement officer may remove the student from the bus. The principal and parent(s) shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible.
8. Students in grades 5-12 who are involved in a fight and/or cited for a category IV offense(s) will be turned over to a campus administrator for discipline action as outlined in the Student Handbook for the respective campus.

SUSPENSIONS AND HEARING PROCEDURES

Notice to Parents and Appeal Process may be found in the Campus Discipline Management Plan.

Immediate appropriate legal action and/or suspension from the bus will be enforced against any person participating in the following infringements:

1. Possession of firearms, a knife, or other dangerous devices will not be permitted and may result in immediate loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.
2. Using abusive, profane language on or near a bus in which students are being transported or directing such language toward the students or the driver.
3. Hindering in any manner the operation of a school bus or obstructing, unnecessarily, any roadway on which a school bus travels.
4. Making threats against or engaging in physical contact with a school bus driver.

Discipline Procedure

When students receive their 3rd bus safety reports they may receive a 3 day suspension from transportation; 4 reports may = 5 day suspension; 5 reports may = 1 month suspension; and 6 reports may = suspension for the remainder of the school year.

***At the discretion of the Transportation Department, bus-riding privileges may be suspended and/or the length of the suspension may be changed from the above discipline procedure due to the nature of the infraction.**

DETECTION

Individual school buses may be equipped with video cameras that will record the conduct of students and any verbal communication between students and driver. This recording may be used for disciplinary purposes.

Pursuant to Texas Education Code §26.009(b), schools can videotape students without parent permission for purposes of maintaining discipline. However, under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the parent may only view the video if their child is the only student in the video. If the video reveals other students then that video cannot be viewed by any parent. The Texas Attorney General has addressed this issue and determined that videotapes made on school buses, on which the driver addresses some students by name and which “show the faces, bodies, and behavior of students of the district” are education records under FERPA and are exempted from disclosure. Texas Attorney General or 95-821 (1975)

Dickinson Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to its programs, services, or activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals with disabilities, or in any aspect of their operations. The Dickinson Independent School District also does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices.

This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding the ADA and Section 504 may be forwarded to the designated ADA and Section 504 Compliance coordinators:

Personnel Issues: Deputy Superintendent for Business and Operations, 281-229-6010
Executive Director of Human Resources, 281-229-6016

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