

Introduction

The administration and bus operators of Winona Area Public Schools believe that all those involved in bus transportation should understand and abide by the rules that have been adopted for safety purposes. The following are the transportation rules and responsibilities for all people concerned with busing in our school district. It is necessary for all parents, guardians, and students involved in bus transportation to read this information carefully and keep this transportation guide readily available for reference. We solicit the cooperation of everyone concerned in providing safe transportation of students to and from school.

This handbook is a supplement to the board policies that govern student transportation. For a complete understanding of the districts expectations, rules and regulations please refer to the following District Policies:

#707 Transportation of Public School Students

#710 Extracurricular Transportation

#708 Transportation of Nonpublic School Students

#711 Video Recording on School Buses

#709 Student Transportation Safety Policy

#798 Attendance Area Boundaries

#799 Bus Travel on Public Roads

#899 Inclement Weather and Emergency School Closings

If you have transportation concerns or questions, contact the Transportation Office, 903 Gilmore Ave., Winona. The phone number is (507) 494-0810.

Student Transportation Services

The School District shall operate buses to provide pupil transportation as required by law. The district is responsible for and the final authority in defining the operation of all buses, e.g. scheduling, routing and establishing rules and regulations, etc.

Buses shall be used to transport students to and from schools, between schools, on field trips, and for most co-curricular activities.

Only regularly enrolled students in the public, private and parochial schools may ride on the public school buses. Drivers are not permitted to pick up adults or others who do not attend the Winona Public, Private, or Parochial Schools. Minnesota State Law states that transportation by a school is a **PRIVILEGE NOT A RIGHT**.

Winona Area Public Schools uses a two tier busing structure. Elementary students are transported on the first tier and school times are 7:45-2:15. Secondary students are transported on the second tier and school times are 9:00-3:30. First Student is the contractor transporting all students in the district.

The School Board has established the following procedure points:

1. All public, non public and charter school children are eligible for transportation if they live one mile or more, or another distance designated by the School Board, from their home school of attendance.
2. The school board has established a one mile walk boundary for each school with in the district. Roadways that are deemed to be hazardous for students to cross are Highway 61, Highway 14, Highway 43, Highway 248. Students will not be expected to cross these roadways in order to walk to their school of attendance. Kindergartners will not be expected to cross the railroad track in order to walk to their school of attendance and will be offered transportation.
3. All WAPS students must register annually using the Annual Student Information Update process through Infinite Campus. Non public and charter schools should also register annually using the online

registration form located on the WAPS Transportation webpage. Failure to register by the required deadline, could result in delayed transportation assignments at the beginning of the school year.

4. Families may choose one pick up location and one drop off location. These locations must be consistent every day. Although the pickup and drop off location do not need to be the same location, the pick up location must be the same everyday and drop-off locations must be at the same each day. No alternating schedules will be accepted. Each location must be an eligible location for transportation. Parents may request an exception for alternating schedules for students that live in two households. The Joint Custody Transportation Exception Request Form must be completed at the time of registration and will be reviewed by the Superintendent for approval. The form is located on the Transportation page of the website.
5. School buses travel only on state, county and township roads. Bus stop locations are determined by the district's Transportation Coordinator and bus drivers have no authority to make any changes to bus stops.
6. School bus laws require the use of stop arms and flashing red lights whenever students are dropped off and picked up. Stop arms and flashing red lights mean other drivers stop and wait at least 20 feet from the bus. Other drivers are required to stop whether following or approaching from the opposite direction.
7. School buses do not drive on private driveways. An exception to this rule would be a designated turn-around or driving into a mobile home court area where permission has been granted by the owner.
8. Special transportation is provided for handicapped students who cannot travel to and from school on the regular bus routes.
9. **Students ride only their assigned buses. Students are not allowed to switch buses or bring another rider on their bus.** Temporary transportation **MAY** be arranged **ONLY** for an emergency situation. Parents/Guardians **MUST** call the Transportation Office to request **prior** arrangements. All requests will be determined at the discretion of the Transportation Coordinator.
10. Large articles, large musical instruments, pets, firearms, or other hazardous materials are not allowed on the bus.
11. The District has a contractual agreement with First Student. If you have a question regarding their operation the phone number is (507) 961-2176.
12. Questions or concerns regarding student transportation are to be directed to the Transportation Coordinator, 903 Gilmore Ave. or call 507-494-0810.

Registration

All students must register for busing annually using the annual student information update through Infinite Campus. Students attending non-public or parochial schools that qualify for transportation should also register annually using the on-line form located on the WAPS Transportation page. Registrations for the fall school year are due by June 10. Failure to complete the proper registration by June 10, could result in delayed transportation assignments in the fall.

If you are moving during the school year, please update and verify your change of address at your earliest opportunity by notifying the school of attendance or by using the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Once the school has been notified of your change, WAPS students should complete the WAPS Transportation Change Form located on the district website transportation page. Charter and non public students should complete the "Charter/Non Public Transportation Change Registration form. Please complete a new form for each child.

Attendance Area Boundaries

The district will provide transportation service for all eligible students to the school in their attendance area.

Transportation will not be provided to students attending schools outside their attendance area. If you have questions regarding attendance area boundaries please review district policy 798 - "Attendance Area Boundaries" or call the Transportation Office at 494-0810.

Daycare Requests

Parents of students who want to designate one location other than the home for bus transportation must complete the "Daycare Stop Request" section on their registration. Families must complete this request annually to continue to receive this service. This request must be consistent; pick-up and drop-off must be at the same location each day.

For parents choosing child care outside their resident attendance area, those parents may, between April 1 and June 15 annually, designate one child care address in a different attendance area. School District staff will inform the parent in writing of a decision on or before August 1. That child care address then becomes the attendance area and regular bus stop if the child care address is eligible for busing. If eligible, the District will transport the student from child care to school and from school back to the child care address. The District will not provide transportation for student to or from a child care address outside the student's home attendance area school. No child care designations outside the attendance area may be filled out earlier than April 1 of each year.

Code of Conduct - Bus Behavior

The School Board has adopted the following Code of Conduct for bus riders:

Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible to the driver of the bus. Riding the school bus, whether to or from school or related to an extracurricular activity, is a privilege that can be revoked for inappropriate behavior. All students, including nonpublic and charter school students, are expected to follow the same standards of behavior while riding a bus as they are in school or at a school-sponsored activity. All school rules are in effect while a student is waiting at a bus stop or riding the bus. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with these policies. Drivers have the authority to assign a student to a seat when necessary. The driver of any school bus shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported. Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and exhibit responsible behavior.

Bus Stops

Bus stops are determined by need and location of bus riders and may change from year to year. Students must use the stop assigned unless another stop is approved by the Transportation Office. **Students may ride only their assigned bus. Extra riders, such as friends, are not allowed to ride.**

Get to your bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pick up time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students. Regular route stops are not door to door stops and is not unusual for student to have to walk up to three blocks to their bus stop.

Route Timing

When school opens in the fall, inconsistencies in route timings are often experienced. Fortunately, the weather during that time of the year is usually quite pleasant and we appreciate your patience as drivers get familiar with their routes and riders. As the year progresses, the times should be consistent, but it is still a good idea to be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes ahead of the scheduled pick up time. The weather, traffic and students not riding can affect the timing.

Rules at the Bus Stop

- Students should get to their bus stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled pick up time. The bus does not wait for late students.
- Respect the property of others while waiting at your bus stop.
- Stay away from the street, road or highway when waiting for the bus and wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus. During winter, children should never walk or play on the snow banks. After existing, move away from the bus.
- Students that must cross the street should always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see them. Students should wait for the drivers signal before crossing the street.
- REMINDER: Parents/Guardians are responsible for the discipline of their students at the bus stop. It is NOT the responsibility of the bus operators or the school district. Severe problems should be directed to the Police Department.**

Getting on the Bus

- Stand several feet back from where the bus will stop.
- Line up and wait your turn. Wait for the bus to stop before moving forward to board it. Pushing and shoving causes accidents.
- Use the handrail when boarding the bus.
- Take a seat quickly; delays in getting seated may cause the buses to be late.
- Do not save seats for friends.
- A driver may assign younger students a seat towards the front of the bus and older students a seat towards the back of the bus at his/her discretion.

Riding the Bus

- Treat drivers and other riders with respect.
- Students may ride only their assigned bus. Extra riders, such as friends, are not allowed to ride.
- Get on and off at your assigned stops.
- Use the bus for transportation to and from school only.
- No eating or drinking on the bus (unless prior permission is received from the driver or district staff member.Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus. Keep your arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
Sit facing forward.
- Refrain from inappropriate or disruptive behavior.No fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay.
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- Objects that may be hazardous such as firearms, firecrackers, etc. are not allowed on the bus. Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the bus.
- No selling of merchandise.

- Electronic devices and cell phones with headphones are allowed if they do not disturb other students and the driver.
- No use or possession of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or prescription medications.
- Do not damage the school bus. Immediately report to the driver any damage to the bus.
- Large objects such as golf clubs, skis, hockey sticks, skateboards and large musical instruments (i.e. tuba, drums, etc.) are not allowed on the bus.
- Do not throw anything on the bus, or out of the windows.

Video Camera capability is on each bus – Students may be monitored

Leaving the Bus

- Do not get up until the bus stops.
- Pushing and shoving will not be allowed.
- IMMEDIATELY MOVE AWAY FROM THE BUS**
- If you have to cross the road, walk in front of the bus about 10 giant steps so you can see the driver's face. **IF YOU CAN SEE THE DRIVER'S EYES- THE DRIVER CAN SEE YOU!**
- If you do not have to cross the road stay away from the side of the bus.
- ALWAYS REMEMBER-** if you can touch the side of the bus, then you are **TOO** close.
- Absolutely no "skitching"-holding on the back of the bus while it is moving on snowy and icy roads. Skitching is dangerous and illegal.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, some route adjustments may be necessary. On mornings when schools are closed due to weather, every effort will be made to inform local radio and TV stations by 5:30 a.m. If schools are dismissed early, radio/TV announcements, the school's website and the Instant Alert system will also keep you informed.

PLAN FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY TRAINING

School Bus Safety Week

The school district may designate a school bus safety week. The National School Bus Safety Week is the third week in October.

Student Training

The school district shall provide students enrolled in grades kindergarten (K) through 10 with age-appropriate school bus safety training of the following concepts:

- transportation by school bus is a privilege, not a right;
- school district policies for student conduct and school bus safety;
- appropriate conduct while on the bus;
- the danger zones surrounding a school bus;
- procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus;
- procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing; and
- school bus evacuation and other emergency procedures.

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All students in grades K through 6 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training by the end of the third week of school. All students in grades 7 through 10 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training or receive bus safety instructional materials by the end of the sixth week of school, if they have not previously received school bus training. Students in grades K through 10 who enroll in a school after the second week of school, are transported by school bus, and have not received training in their previous school districts shall undergo school bus safety training or receive bus safety instructional materials within four weeks of their first day of attendance. The district will also provide bus safety training for pre-school children that may utilize bus services.

The school district and a nonpublic school with students transported by school bus at public expense must provide students enrolled in grades K through 3 school bus safety training twice during the school year.

Students taking driver's training instructional classes and other students in grades 9 and 10 must receive training in the laws and proper procedures for operating a motor vehicle in the vicinity of a school bus.

The school district and a nonpublic school with students transported by school bus at public expense must conduct a school bus evacuation drill at least once during the school year.

The school district will make reasonable accommodations in training for students known to speak English as a second language and students with disabilities.

The school district may provide kindergarten students with school bus safety training before the first day of school.

The school district may provide student safety education for bicycling and pedestrian safety for students in grades K through 5.

The district will also provide applicable bus safety training for preschool students that utilize transportation.

The school district shall adopt and make available for public review a curriculum for transportation safety education.

Nonpublic school students transported by the school district will receive school bus safety training by their nonpublic school. The nonpublic schools may use the school district's school transportation safety education curriculum. The nonpublic school must certify to the school district's school transportation safety director that all students enrolled in grades K through 10 have received the appropriate training.

The Pupil Transportation Safety Director in each district must certify to the Superintendent of Schools annually that all students transported by bus have satisfactorily demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the school bus safety competencies according to this section or provide an explanation for a student's failure to demonstrate the competencies. A school district may deny transportation to a student who fails to demonstrate the competencies, unless the student is unable to achieve the competencies due to a disability.

Parent and Guardian Involvement

Tips on bus riding for parents of new riders

In August, the district transportation office will mail transportation schedules to each registered family in the district with estimated pick up and drop off times. It may ease your child's transition if you could walk to the bus stop and/or drive the bus route, before school starts, with your child. The bus may make several stops at different schools before arriving at your child's school. You may wish to instruct your younger children to sit near the front of the bus, if possible.

Some children may make transfers in order to get to their school or to get home from school. Transfers will occur at central locations within the district. Your child may wait at these transfer points until the bus arrives. The bus they take from their school to their transfer point may be a different numbered bus than the bus they ride to school. Write the bus number, parent's name and telephone numbers on a card and put it in their backpack so that school staff can contact the parents if they need to.

Call your child's school to find out if there will be a playground supervisor at the school when your child arrives.

Frequently, parents will follow their child's bus the first few days of school to observe their child transferring to the right bus and/or exiting the bus at the right school. The same holds true when traveling home after school. Your child may not feel comfortable or understand the bus route as easily as an adult. Take the time to go over the bus route with them. This is a good time to emphasize safe ways of boarding and exiting a school bus.

The bus company also suggests that parents have their children ride the bus the first day of school so they are familiar with their bus, pick-up time and drop-off time. Remember that times will vary considerably the first two weeks of school. Thereafter, pick-up and drop-off times are set and children must be at their bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.

Parent and Guardian Notification

The school district school bus and bus stop rules will be provided to each family. Parents and guardians are asked to review the rules with their children.

Parents/Guardians Responsibilities for Transportation Safety

Parents/Guardians are responsible to:

1. Become familiar with school district rules, policies, regulations, and the principles of school bus safety, and thoroughly review them with their children;
2. Support safe riding and walking practices, and recognize that students are responsible for their actions;
3. Accept liability for damage done to buses by children under their legal guardianship;
4. Provide transportation to and from school for students who have lost riding privileges;
5. Communicate safety concerns to their school administrators;
6. Monitor bus stops, if possible;
7. Have their children to the bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives;
8. Provide children with a carrying bag or backpack appropriate for the child's age;
9. Provide transportation for students needing to get large object to or from school. Examples are: golf clubs, skis, hockey sticks, skateboards, projects;
10. Have their children properly dressed for the weather; and

11. Have a plan in case the bus is late or if there is a late start or early dismissal at school.
12. Parents are responsible for the safety of their children up until the time the bus arrives.

Transportation of Preschool Students

Winona Area Public Schools will transport 3 to 5 year old students enrolled in Community Kids Preschool and VPK . As stipulated in MN statute, seatbelts for this age are not required when transported on school buses. Preschool students will be on the regular routes that transport K-4 students and there will not be bus monitors on the buses.

In order to ensure the safety of preschool students transported by bus, the following stipulations are in place:

- Children must wear bus name tags with their name and correct drop off information every day for the entire school year. It is recommended that children wear a bus tag and have a copy of the tag attached to their backpack.
- Preschool children are required to be seated in the front seats of the bus.
- There will not be an extra adult assigned to the bus besides the driver for every trip.
- Preschool children must be met at the bus stop for both pick up and drop off by a designated adult.
- Bus stops will be neighborhood stops and can be located up to 3 blocks from the students home or daycare. Having the stop be viewable from home or daycare is not required.
- Preschool children must be picked up and dropped off at the same location every day.
- The privilege to ride the bus will be jeopardized if the child does not have a designated adult meet them at the bus stop for both pick up and drop off.
- If there is no one at the bus stop, the driver will keep the student aboard and will make second attempt to drop off and will contact dispatch for further instructions.
- Preschool students must live 1 mile or more from the school attendance to be eligible for transportation. Children who are not eligible for transportation and are walking, must be accompanied by an adult.

Discipline Procedures

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all regular and late routes and will ultimately be at the discretion of the school administrator. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extracurricular events (for example, field trips or competitions) will be in the sole discretion of the school district. Parents or guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges. Each school year students start with a clean slate. Students are expected to follow the same standards of behavior while riding a bus as when in school or at a school sponsored activity. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply from the time a student arrives at the bus stop prior to boarding the bus until the student leaves the bus stop area after exiting from the bus at the end of a school day or event. Discipline related to school bus behavior is the responsibility of the building principal or other designated administrator, and consequences of school bus misbehavior shall not be imposed by bus drivers or bus operators unless the safe and efficient operation of the bus is compromised. The term "bus stop" includes bus transfer points.

The school must notify parents of any disciplinary action taken against their child, including the nature of the misconduct and the specific consequence imposed, within 24 hours. If bus riding privileges are

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suspended, parents must be notified by the school administrator before the student would normally next board the bus. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school to resolve issues of misconduct.

The following is a list of conduct infractions which are to be reported by the bus driver to the student's school, and the appropriate consequences. This list is not meant to include all possible infractions; other misconduct of similar severity will result in the appropriate disciplinary action. Efforts will be made to follow progressive discipline for each offense. Disciplinary action may be taken without previous warning for major infractions.

Infractions Include But Are Not Limited To:

- Spitting or placing other bodily fluids in contact with other riders or driver
- Standing or leaving seat while the bus is in motion, including changing seats
- Yelling or excessive noise
- Eating or drinking on the bus without permission
- Littering on the bus
- Minor horseplay, pushing, shoving or teasing
- Minor disrespect to a bus driver or any other rider
- Exiting at unauthorized stop
- Similar minor infractions as reported by the bus driver
- Profanity, obscene noises or obscene gestures
- Refusal to comply with the bus drivers instructions
- Unauthorized entrance or exit through the emergency door
- Vandalism of any type to the bus
- Theft
- Fighting or other physical aggression (even if done "in fun")
- Pushing or shoving which causes an individual to lose his/her balance, causing injury or unsafe conditions
- Repeated use of profanity, obscene noises or obscene gestures
- Repeated spitting or placing other bodily fluids in contact with other riders or driver
- Repeated refusal to comply with the bus drivers instructions
- Any comments or actions of a sexual nature against any individual on the bus
- Serious disrespect to a bus driver or any other rider (or repeated minor offenses)
- Extending any part of the body out of a window, even momentarily, while the bus is moving
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol or any prescription drug not in its original container with the type of drug
- Harassment or threats of any kind (physical or verbal) against a driver or another student
- Bringing animals on the bus
- Possession of a weapon
- Possession of a cigarette lighter or other flammable liquid
- Possession of or lighting of matches, candles, fireworks
- Any illegal act as defined by local ordinances, Minnesota Statutes or Federal law
- Any action with intent to cause bodily harm

Consequences of Infractions

All Students (PreK-12)

1st Offense:

Verbal warning

2nd Offense:

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Written warning/notification of parents

3rd Offense:

Meeting with parents/school-day suspension(s) from riding the bus assigned at the administrator's discretion.

Further Offenses:

individually considered. Students may be suspended for longer periods of time, including the remainder of the school year.

Other Discipline

Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school also may result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

Records

Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual school building and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of student misbehavior on a school bus or in a bus-loading or unloading area that causes an immediate and substantial danger to the student or surrounding persons or property will be provided by the school district to the Department of Public Safety in accordance with state and federal law.

Vandalism/Bus Damage

Students damaging school buses will be responsible for the damages. Failure to pay such damages (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks may result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

Notice

School bus and bus stop rules and consequences for violations of these rules will be reviewed with students annually and copies of these rules will be made available to students. School bus rules are to be posted on each school bus.

Criminal Conduct

In cases involving criminal conduct (for example, assault, weapons, drug possession, or vandalism), the appropriate school district personnel and local law enforcement officials will be informed. The bus driver will contact and inform the bus company official of the infraction and immediately safely park the bus to await arrival of law enforcement, bus company and/or school officials. School officials will attempt to locate parents or other designated adult to pick up their child immediately. Law enforcement may take custody of the student at a designated location. Law enforcement and the school principal or district transportation personnel will collectively decide if the child is taken home by the officer, to the school, or another facility. The driver will continue the route to completion after the student is taken by the appropriate office.