

Athletic/Field Trips

Bus Rider Rules and Supervision Guidelines

The unique nature of athletic trips and field trips mandates special rules and procedures. These trip bus rules must be within the spirit and intent of the law and district policy. Adjustments benefit the programs involved as well as the riders, student supervisors and drivers. These guidelines and rules clarify the relationship between the bus driver whose primary responsibility during the trip is safe transport of students/student athletes and coaches/teachers whose primary responsibility is student management.

Loading and Storage

State law and district policy prohibit blocking the aisle of the bus for any reason and at any time. Students may not place or store equipment or clothing in the aisle, by the emergency exits, or on the back ledge and compartment. Nor can students sit or lie down in these areas. This is one of the most important safety concerns that drivers and coaches should share.

Coaches and drivers should make sure that all equipment carried inside the bus is safely stowed within the compartment formed by the bus seats. No object should be stored above the level of the top of the seats. The bus driver must approve storage arrangements before the bus moves. Emergency exits must remain unblocked at all times.

Supervision

The ultimate decision regarding bus conduct, cleanliness, stops, etc. rests with the bus driver. Whenever there is an extra-curricular activity or field trip there should be one or more coaches or teachers who ride the bus. The driver and the coach/teacher in charge of the trip should discuss the trip itinerary, where planned stops will be and review the approximate schedule so that both understand it before the bus leaves the school.

Discipline

State law and school district policy both specify that the driver has the final authority for discipline. However, the supervisor most familiar with the students/athletes should be the person who takes first responsibility for monitoring behavior of the athletes on his/her team or the students in his class. This coach/teacher should, immediately upon boarding the bus, identify him or herself to the driver.

Head Count

Coaches should do a head count prior to leaving for the return trip and account for all team members before the team leaves. The coach is responsible for giving the driver the information that all riders are on the bus and ready to begin the rest of the trip.

Noise

Noise can be a serious and dangerous distraction to the driver. While individuals have different tolerance levels for noise, a steady background level of conversation between students is not a problem. Sudden loud conversations across widely separated areas of the bus, or squeals and shouts distract the driver's attention from driving and cannot be allowed.

Rules adjustments for trips

Food

Consumption of food and drinks is generally not allowed on buses. This will be the policy within the Tri Cities. Middle school students will be allowed to eat on buses on trips outside of the immediate tri cities area.

The only time that students will be allowed to eat on the bus is when that arrangement is made in advance. The driver and coach should discuss when the team or group will eat and plan clean up procedures in advance. A primary reason for this strict rule is the difficulty with cleaning up pop spills, sunflower seeds or ice cream spills.

Drinks

No student should be allowed to bring glass bottles on the bus. Screw top plastic bottles are preferred. Drinks in paper cups with plastic caps should be consumed off the bus.

Clean up

Drivers will have cleaning materials and towels for mopping up messes and cleaning up spills on the bus. Coaches should designate students to clean up messes and pick up loose litter on the bus. The coach and driver should make an inspection of the bus for problems prior to the driver returning the bus to the lot after the end of a trip.

Separate Seating

When teams consist of both boys and girls, they should generally ride with one gender in front and the other in the back. This is particularly important when the primary coach for the specific team is not on the bus such as when the boys and girls teams from the early games are returning before the others and one of their coaches is staying behind. When more than one coach is riding a bus with boys and girls, then one coach should ride in front and one in the back.

Reading lights

On night trips some students bring flashlights or reading lights to do homework or to read by. These can be hazardous if they are shined toward the driver or in the mirrors of the bus. Students should use caution when using any kind of light. Drivers will always drive with the lights on at the back of the bus, but may need the lights off in the front and middle of the bus to reduce glare, particularly in rainy, snowy or icy weather.

Music

The driver may, at a coach's request, turn on the radio. Students frequently bring personal music devices and are encouraged to use these with headphones. In no case should students play "boom boxes" on the bus.

Cleats/Spikes

Athletes are not allowed to wear, put on, or remove shoes with spikes or cleats on the bus. Athletes who damage buses with their spikes/cleats will be charged a damage fee.

Movement on the bus

The district rule on buses is that riders must remain seated facing forward with their feet out of the aisle and within the compartment formed by the seats. On long trips it is understood that there may be a need for coaches to move about the bus to talk with various individuals. Coaches may call individuals forward to talk with them. In such cases it is important to move and be seated safely as quickly as possible. Standing up for any length of time on the bus while it is in motion is dangerous and drivers cannot allow it.

Rules for Riders on Athletic/Field Trips

Team or Group Members:

Know and understand that their coach or supervisor is primarily responsible for maintaining discipline on the trip, but understand that state law and school district policy both specify that the driver has the final authority for discipline.

Follow all regular Richland School District Bus Rules:

Are on time at their Bus Stop

Are Respectful of others and their property

Act in a Safe manner

There are some modifications of basic rules especially for trips if arrangements are made in advance:

- ❖ Teams may eat on the bus on trips outside the Tri Cities if arrangements are made in advance.
- ❖ Teams may have drinks in screw top plastic bottles on the bus if arrangements are made in advance.
- ❖ Coaches will designate team members to pick up messes on the bus at the end of the trip.
- ❖ Male and female team members may be asked to sit separately when they are transported together.
- ❖ Reading lights may be used with driver and coach permission.
- ❖ Team members may use personal music devices with headphones with coach permission. No “boom boxes” are allowed.
- ❖ Athletes may not wear, put on, or take off cleats/spikes on the bus.
- ❖ Team members may move from seat to seat while the bus is in motion at coaches’ direction.
- ❖ No person or equipment can block aisles or exits or the ledge in the back of the bus.
- ❖ Nothing on rear emergency window shelf will be allowed at anytime. Only students or adults in the emergency door seats, no equipment or bags.

THE DRIVER HAS AUTHORITY ON THE BUS AND THE FINAL WORD ON ANY DECISION.