

PARENT HANDBOOK

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS



A PUBLICATION OF
BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

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CONTENTS

Mission Statement	3
Bus Schedules	3
Bus Stops	4
Non-eligible students	4
Student tracking	5
Missing children	5
Items carried on the bus	5
Student management	6
Complaints	8
Accidents	8
Medications	9
Teen Parents	9

The Transportation Department strives to provide safe, timely, and convenient school bus service with as few problems and inconveniences as possible. School buses are an integral part of the entire school system and as such, all aspects of the bus experience should contribute to the overall education of our students. It is intended that each student's bus ride be as pleasant as possible so they arrive at school receptive to learning and the positive experiences they have at school are carried over to a safe ride home. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to integrate the efforts of bus drivers, supervisors, mechanics, teachers, principals, and parents. This Handbook for School Bus Transportation has been developed in order to improve communications between the school, parents, and the Transportation Department.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Transportation Department is the following:

TO: Transport every eligible student to and from school and school activities in the safest manner possible, providing clean, safe, friendly, on-time, equitable and efficient service all year.

IN A WAY THAT:

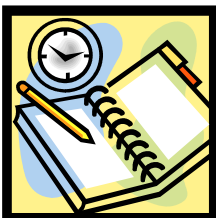
- Provides safe and healthy transportation services to students.
- Assures equity of service to all students qualified for transportation service under School Board Policy.
- Meets the transportation needs of students.
- Maximizes the financial commitment to student transportation through efficient routing, scheduling, and use of equipment.
- Provides individual and group training to assure employees possess current knowledge and maintain a high skill level.

SO THAT: The mission and priorities of the School Board, Administration, and Schools are supported.

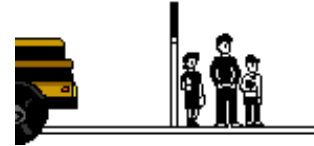
BUS SCHEDULES

BVSD schools (generally) operate on a three tiered schedule for school start and dismissal times. In doing so, the district is able to provide bus service to its students using fewer buses than if all schools started at the same time. Generally, each bus services three schools per day, visiting each of those schools once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The difference in start times and dismissal times between schools determines the amount of time that a bus has to drop students at one school, pick up more students to deliver to the second or third school. In the afternoon the bus has even less time to complete the run due to inconsistent length of day between schools and the fact that the bus waits 7 minutes after dismissal for all to board before leaving the school.

The Transportation Department invests considerable effort into getting the buses to the schools within 10 minutes before the start of classes and makes every attempt possible to get buses to the schools within 15 minutes after school dismissal. Expect buses to be late on days with ice and snow. Safety over schedule is our priority at all times.



BUS STOPS



The Transportation Department currently lists over 3,000 bus stops which are serviced every day. The location of these bus stops is chosen based on safety, convenience for **ALL** students using the stop, and property owner concerns. When possible, a stop will be located at a student's home or on public property to help deter complaints from people without children. The distance between bus stops (i.e. the distance a child has to walk to the bus stop) may vary due to safety considerations on the walking route and the age of the child. Every attempt will be made to locate stops within 4/10th of a mile of every student, except for High School stops which are within ½ mile of the student's home. Generally, the distance between bus stops will be similar across the district to assure that all students receive the same level of service. As per Board Policy, a bus stop may not be located within 800 feet of another bus stop.

Students are to use the stop closest to their home. Bus drivers are not to allow children to use any bus stop they please. Consistency by the students in the bus stops they use will help the driver to keep track of the children. **Students may use one stop in the morning and a different stop in the afternoon, provided they are consistent and don't change.**

Parents are **HIGHLY** encouraged to accompany their child to the bus stop and to work with other parents to help supervise children waiting for the bus. Vandalism, loud disturbances, and rudeness are the most likely causes of complaints regarding bus stops. **All requests by property owners to move bus stops are honored immediately.** In some neighborhoods, all property owners around the stop location have complained to the extent that there is no longer any place to move the stop. Therefore, **when all options are exhausted, the stop must be eliminated and students have to walk to another stop location.** This increases problems at other stops due to the increase in the number of children at the stop, and soon, we are looking for another stop location.

Occasionally a student will enroll who lives in a transportation qualified area that does not have a bus stop. When this occurs, the transportation department should be notified directly and a stop will be created to accommodate that neighborhood. **Please allow at least 3 days for processing and notification before service starts.** In the case of neighborhoods which are under construction, stops will not be located within the neighborhood until all construction work is substantially completed.

Students who live outside the boundaries of Boulder Valley Schools or outside of the attendance area for the school they are attending (open enrolled) are allowed to ride the bus on a space available basis if they use an existing stop. No new stops will be created to accommodate students riding on a Space available status. **'Application for Space Available Busing' forms are available from the Transportation Department. Forms need to be submitted annually. Space Available students will not be allowed to ride until September 15th in any school year or until they are notified by Transportation of their application approval.**

NON-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Drivers are to request a written notification from the school office for students they do not recognize. The driver will not accept notes directly from parents. Students should take notes from parents to the office and notification should be given from the school office. The same procedures are to be followed if a student wishes to get off at a different stop.

Drivers should also be notified of new students and students who move. Notices should

also be issued for students to ride to/from an alternate bus stop (i.e. a different stop in the morning than the stop used in the afternoon). Riding a different bus in the morning than in the afternoon to a different location will require a Space Available request for the bus which is not serving the students neighborhood of residence.

STUDENT TRACKING

Bus drivers are responsible for students while they are on the bus. **It is the parent's responsibility to see that their children get to and from the bus stop safely and on time.** It is the school's responsibility to get the students to and from the classroom and the bus. If a student chooses not to ride the bus and does not board the bus, the Transportation Department will not be able to account for that student.

Students are to use only one bus stop unless specifically authorized. Drivers become familiar with which students use which stops, however, the driver may not always be able to assure that students use the same stop all the time. Parents must instruct their children to always use the same bus stop. Small children should be escorted to the bus stop by their parents and be met at the bus stop by their parents after school until they become familiar with the stop location and the way home. Parents should point out specific landmarks to their children, especially elementary children, to assure that they get off at the right bus stop or, preferably, instruct their student to only get off the bus when they see their parent there to greet them.

The first two weeks of school are the most likely time for a student to get on the wrong bus causing severe concern and stress for parents as well as the student, until the child is located. If the bus or the neighborhood does not look familiar they should talk to the driver – do not get off of the bus.

MISSING CHILDREN

Occasionally children will get on the wrong bus, miss the bus, choose not to ride the bus, or get off at the wrong stop resulting in a frantic parent phone call. At the first indication that a student cannot be found, the Transportation Department and school will work with the dispatchers to try and locate the student. Dispatchers will contact the driver of the bus to determine if the student is on board. Knowing what the child was wearing is always a big help. If the student is not on the bus and the driver does not remember the child getting off of the bus, the Dispatchers will contact other buses servicing the school to determine if the child boarded the wrong bus. Supervisors will drive neighborhoods looking for the child. Parents should contact relatives and friends of the student. Many times students go to other places without informing their parents.

Often a parent calls transportation after the school has closed and the dispatchers are unable to contact anyone at the school. After hours, dispatchers or security will attempt to call drivers at home to gain information about the student. However, if initial attempts fail, the police should be called.

ITEMS CARRIED ON THE BUS

Students are not allowed to bring items on the bus that cannot be stored in overhead racks (if the bus has overhead racks), carried in their lap while properly seated, stored under the seat, or held in front of them while properly seated. This includes large band instruments, even if the student is enrolled in band. Large book bags or other carrying devices are not allowed if they do not meet these requirements. It is the parents'

responsibility to transport these items to school. Such items pose a safety hazard in the event of an accident. Also, routes are based on the number of eligible children and there may not be enough room to accommodate these items.

No glass containers are allowed on the bus.

No pets or animals of any kind are allowed on the bus, with the exception of service animals.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT

THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SUSPEND BUS RIDING PRIVILEGES AT ANY TIME TO MAINTAIN SAFETY OF THE STUDENTS.

Proper behavior by students is not simply a matter of annoyance to the driver or even other students. The bus driver is concerned about the safety and welfare of all students on the bus and so must be constantly aware of the interactions of students on the bus. Sudden noises may indicate one student inflicting physical or verbal abuse on another student, or it may only be horse play. **Whatever the disturbance, good or bad, it is a distraction to the driver and a potential accident.** Therefore, horse play or any other type of disturbance is treated with the same consequences as fighting or any other unsafe act.

Many parents disassociate the bus with cars and do not relate their own driving experience with that of bus drivers. Behavior that a parent would never allow in their own car is often seen by that same parent as harmless on the bus. Not only is this behavior unacceptable in a car, when this type of behavior is multiplied by the number of kids on a bus it becomes an even greater distraction to the driver and a very real safety hazard.

It is imperative that the students are taught the importance of proper behavior on the bus and the seriousness of what can happen if they do not behave. This is why the Transportation Department supports strict enforcement of the rules and consistent application of consequences in cases of misbehavior. Students who are unable to conform to the requirements of bus passengers will not be allowed to ride the bus. The safety of other students will not be compromised to accommodate misbehavior of one or a few!

Should a student misbehave on the bus, every effort will be made to enlist the cooperation of parents to correct the student's behavior. However, sometimes, consequences the parent imposes at home are not sufficient and/or the parent is not cooperative. If the parent does not understand the bus rules and the hazards that improper behavior pose, they will not be able to effectively communicate that to their children. Often, parents, as well as students, need to be informed as to bus rules and etiquette. Unfortunately, when all else fails, it is necessary to remove the student's privilege of riding the bus. While this is an inconvenience to the parent, it is not intended as a punishment to the parent, but the parent should be aware that their help in correcting the student's behavior will be the decisive factor in the student being able to ride the bus. **Since school bus law states that schools "may" provide school bus transportation, riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS THE SAFETY OF OTHER STUDENTS TO BE COMPROMISED TO ACCOMMODATE THE WORK SCHEDULE OR CONVENIENCE OF A PARENT.** Chronic misbehavior **MUST** result in removal of bus privileges.

The bus is a part of the school system and, therefore, an extension of the classroom. Minimum expected behavior on the bus is the same as expected in the classroom, and, in some areas of safety, even more restrictions are placed on behavior than in the classroom. It is imperative that students perceive the bus as a part of the school and classroom. Therefore, any



behavior that would result in suspension from school, when that behavior is displayed on the bus, must receive the same consequence. If something is not allowed in the school or on school grounds, it is not allowed on the bus either. The objective is to correct the behavior, not just to punish.

Bus stops pose a unique problem since they are not actually school property. (Although a few bus stops are actually on school property.) While the property at the bus stop is not owned by the school district, it is being used by the district as a description of where students are to meet the bus. This implies that the district has some responsibility in trying to control the behavior of students while waiting for the bus. The situation is similar to students walking to and from school. For example, if a student is harassing another student while walking to school, the principal would take steps to prevent this from happening, from sanctions at school up to calling the police. The same should be done for problems at bus stops. Principals should impose consequences for reported bus stop behavior similar to that imposed for bus misbehavior.



While bus drivers are not allowed to search book bags, backpacks, etc., they are often able to observe students in possession of prohibited items. This often occurs when the students are exiting the bus at a bus stop and, upon leaving the bus, such as when a student takes a cigarette out of a pocket or bag after stepping off of the bus. This is de-facto evidence that the student was in possession of tobacco at the school, and the consequences are the same as if he/she were caught with the cigarette at school. Reference Board Policy **JGD/JGE**

Bus drivers are employees of the school district and, therefore, they are entitled to the same respect from students as any other employee of the district. In light of the hazardous nature of their job and the necessity of cooperation from the students in the performance of that job, it is even more imperative that the bus drivers' directions to students are carried out. This cannot be accomplished if the students are allowed to make disparaging remarks to or about the driver. Such remarks undermine the authority of the driver which may cause the students to ignore his/her directives in the event of an emergency. Therefore, disrespectful comments and actions directed toward bus drivers must be dealt with accordingly.

Bus drivers are instructed to utilize a 4 step procedure in dealing with student misbehavior. These steps, with consequences, are:

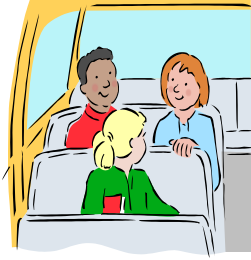
- First Offense** Verbal Warning
- Second Offense** Assigned Seat for 3 days (or more)
- Third Offense** Bus Driver calls Parent
- Fourth Offense** Conduct Report sent to Principal

(Bus Driver calls parent to inform that Conduct Report has been sent)

Severe Clause: Drivers will immediately submit reports (write-ups) for students who severely misbehave, directly jeopardize the safe operation of the school bus, or directly challenge the authority of, or make disrespectful comments or actions toward the bus driver or other school official. **Principals should suspend bus riding privileges immediately upon receiving this type of report.** A partial list of severe violations include, but is not limited to: vandalism, fighting, gang-related involvement, failure to cooperate with driver or other official, abusive or defiant language, threats, gestures, written words or pictures directed toward driver or other official, and the possession or use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or weapons of any kind.



Food (including candy) or drink is not allowed on the bus. While it may appear that this rule is to maintain the cleanliness of the bus (which it does), its primary purpose is safety related. The bus is a rough riding



vehicle, especially in the back. Eating and drinking while on the bus, especially on rough city streets, presents a choking hazard. With the numbers of students having severe allergies, it is our intention to minimize their risk to exposure. Since any bus could be used at any time, enforcing this guideline will assist us in accomplishing this goal.

All appeals of bus suspensions should be handled at the school in the same manner that any other disciplinary appeal would be handled. The Transportation Department will refer requests for appeals to the appropriate Principal. Drivers and transportation supervisors will be made available, as schedule permits, to attend conferences with parents. In addition, holding conferences at the school emphasizes the connection between the bus and the school.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints made by parents that concern driver conduct, scheduling, stop locations, etc. should be referred to the Transportation Department. If the driver's conduct is called into question, this will first be investigated by the Terminal Supervisor and then, if necessary, a conference will be held with the parent and the student at the school. When directing complaints to transportation, please do not refer these complaints to specific individuals within the Transportation Department. All department personnel are capable of taking the complaint and/or referring the call to the proper supervisor. All complaints are considered and, when possible, action is taken to resolve the problem. Complaints regarding conduct of other students should be handled at the school.

ACCIDENTS

Should a bus be involved in an accident with students on board, the transportation dispatchers will notify the school which the students on the bus attend. The dispatcher will endeavor to keep the school informed as to injuries, delays, etc. Should a serious accident occur that includes injuries to students, parents of the injured students will be notified as soon as possible by the Transportation Department or EMS personnel after names are obtained from the students on the bus. For students who elect to see the school nurse after an accident, it will be the responsibility of the school nurse to notify the parents.

When an accident occurs, the police are notified. One of the responsibilities of the driver is to write down the names of all students on the bus and the location in which they were sitting at the time of the accident. After the police arrive, they also make a list of these names and seating locations. This listing of names and other investigations can be tedious causing parents to be concerned with the late arrival of their children. Any concerns should be addressed directly with the Transportation Department.

PARENTS ARE DISCOURAGED FROM GOING TO THE SITE OF THE ACCIDENT UNLESS INFORMED THAT THEIR STUDENT IS INJURED. STUDENTS CAN ONLY BE RELEASED BY THE POLICE OFFICER IN CHARGE. Parents will not be allowed to pick up their children, and at an accident site until they are released, and then, proper identification will be required.

All accidents are investigated by the Transportation Department. When necessary, an alternate bus is sent to the site to take the children home or to school. Upon release by the Officer in charge, the children will be taken to their destinations as quickly as possible.

All inquires about payment of medical claims should be



made to the Human Resources Department. **The District does not automatically assume responsibility for payment of medical claims.** Parents may take their child to any doctor for treatment and then make a claim to the district, however, there is no assurance that the district will pay the claim. Payment of claims is generally determined by the insurance carrier of the vehicle at fault.

MEDICATIONS

Bus drivers and student assistants are not allowed to transport student medications. Since a number of students on the bus may have allergies or a medical condition unknown to the driver, it would be helpful to inform the driver of your child's situation, along with any applications for treatment. We are aware that students that carry asthma inhalers or Epi pens have been trained by their physician, but a 'heads up' would be extremely helpful should a situation arise. Also, students having any other medical issues, such as diabetes or seizures, should be discussed with the driver, along with a plan, as well.

TEEN PARENTS

The Teen Parent program consists of high school age students along with their infant/toddler child/ren. Ensuring the safe transportation of all the students, along with continuing education for the parents is of the highest priority. Therefore, Transportation will provide the CSRSs (Child Safety Restraint Systems) along with any additional training held during Teen Parent class time.

Students participating in the Teen Parent program are expected to maintain the same guidelines as any other BVSD student using Transportation. We understand that children have feeding schedules that may/may not correspond with bus schedules. However, for the safety of the children, the 'no eating' rule on the bus will be enforced. Several CSRS manufacturers recommend this practice in their instruction manual that accompanies the child safety seat. This also applies to those teens still in their pre-delivery state. Riding in the front of the bus may help with any nausea experienced to or from school and is advisable. Infants and their parent should be placed in the front seating areas with the sibling(s) across the aisle.

Teen parents and their child/ren need to be ready to board the bus, at the stop, 5 minutes before departure time. If, for whatever reason, a Teen Parent is not riding— the Transportation Dispatch office needs to be contacted as soon as possible. (The phone numbers for each Terminal are printed on the inside cover of this booklet.) It is necessary to have all communication in reference to ridership done directly with the Transportation Dispatch office—speaking with the driver is helpful, but communicating information to Dispatch ensures any driver associated with the route will be knowledgeable as well.

