

# **Mansfield Independent School District**

## **School Bus Rider's Safety Handbook**



### **“Use our Fuel, Ride the Bus to School”**

Transportation Department 1910  
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Mansfield, Texas 76063

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*Dear Parents and Bus Riders:*

*Mansfield ISD offers the privilege of bus transportation for all eligible students. Eligibility is determined by application of Board policy.*

*We believe that our bus service enhances the learning experience of each student. We are the first faces that they see each school day, and we want to start each day on a positive note. We have established these transportation rules in order to provide our students with a safe, comfortable, and pleasant ride to and from school each day.*

*Effective transportation service requires cooperation among bus drivers & staff, school administrators, students, and parents/guardians. We ask that you read and discuss this handbook with your students to promote a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations.*

*We appreciate your cooperation and support.*

*Sincerely,*

*David R. Walker  
Director of Operations*

## **GENERAL RULES:**

1. The bus is an extension of the classroom and the bus driver is an extension of the teacher. All District policies are observed on district transportation. Obey all instructions given by the bus driver.
2. Students are required to board and leave the bus at assigned bus (home) and campus stops only.
3. Bus routes are designed to provide transportation for students to their designated bus (home) stop, with maximum loading capabilities.
4. In an emergency, if a student must ride home with another child, the bus driver will need a handwritten note from the guardian, including parent contact phone number with a verification signature from their school administrator or permission from an administrator.
5. All Pre-K – 1<sup>st</sup> grade riders must have a parent/guardian present at the stop in order to exit the bus unless accompanied by an older sibling.

## **CONDUCT ON THE SCHOOL BUS:**

The rules of conduct on the school bus include, **but are not limited to**, the following:

1. Seats are assigned by the driver.
2. Students must remain seated in their assigned seat at all times. For safety reasons, students are considered safely seated when they are facing the front, feet out of the aisle, their back to the seat (not backpack), and not sitting on anything, including their legs, books, etc.
3. Keep hands to yourself.
4. Normal conversation between students in the same seat is permitted, but any loud talking or noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition. Drivers may switch on interior lights (or other means) as a signal for students to remain quiet.
5. All students will remain quiet when the bus is approaching and while crossing a railroad crossing.
6. Excessive or malicious teasing will not be tolerated.
7. The use of profane or vulgar language will not be tolerated while on the bus.
8. Arms, head and other parts of the body are to be kept inside the bus at all times.
9. Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.
10. Do not mark, cut, scratch (or enlarge a cut/scratch) or dismantle any part of the bus or its contents. The student/parents are responsible for the cost of repairs. Transportation privileges will be suspended until arrangement for payment is made and the level of discipline is satisfied.
11. Keep books, packages, coats and all other personal items out of the aisle.
12. All personal items must remain in students' bags or purses, including footballs, basketballs, writing devices, skateboards, and etc. while on the bus. They are not to be played with or passed around to others.
13. All carry-on items will be held in the student's lap. Nothing will be allowed in the aisle or blocking the exits. Items that block the view of the Driver are not permitted.
14. Students who allow their electronic devices, including cell phones, MP3 players, I-Pods, hand-held game systems, etc., to become a distraction/disruption to the driver will be directed

to put item(s) away until they exit the bus. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. Students are to have the sound “off” or use headphones that do not distract driver. If a student cannot hear the driver because of the volume of the device, and the Driver has to repeat directions, this will be viewed as a distraction to the driver.

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS:**

1. All tobacco related products, including lighters, matches and E-Cigarettes.
2. All alcoholic beverages.
3. Glass containers.
4. Weapons, such as gun, knife, brass knuckles, etc. or any object resembling a weapon.
5. Explosive devices or any object resembling an explosive device.
6. Harmful or flammable chemicals (alcohol, stink bombs, perfume or aerosol)
7. Laser lights or laser pointers.
8. Rubber bands, water balloons, paint balls
9. Any object (musical instrument, shop/science/history project, etc.), which is too large to be held safely in the student’s lap, and not take the seat of another student.
10. All food and drinks, gum, etc.
11. All/Any animals, insects or reptiles.
12. Other items deemed by the driver as unsafe to transport on the bus.

### **DISRUPTION OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Once a student has boarded the bus, they will be dropped off at their designated stop. Because the bus driver does not have a way to verify custody, we do not allow anyone to remove a student from the bus.

We also ask parents not to attempt to stop or delay the bus. Please call the Transportation Department if you have a concern or need to talk with the bus driver. Do not approach them at the bus stop or attempt to board the bus. *It is a violation of state law (TEC 37.126) for non-riders to board a school bus or to impede its progress. Violators will be prosecuted.*

### **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES:**

An administrator will notify the parent by telephone, email or mail concerning disciplinary violations. If a student is suspended from riding the bus, they must attend school during their suspension.

### **MINOR BUS DISCIPLINE:**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Safety Violation:**

Verbal Warning will be given by the Driver only after there has been a continued violation after being warned and a change of seat assignment has taken place. The parent will then be contacted by the Driver Support Representative (DSR), and informed of the violation.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Safety Violation:**

Verbal Warning will be given by the Driver and the parent contacted by the Driver Support Representative. A warning will be given to the parent that any future disciplinary issues may result in 1-5 day suspension of bus privileges.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Safety Violation:**

Suspension of bus privilege--- 1-5 days

**4<sup>th</sup> Safety Violation:**

Suspension of bus privilege--- 6-10 days

**5<sup>th</sup> Safety Violation:**

Suspension of bus privilege--- 11-15 days

Meeting with the student, parent, administrator and DSR is required. Future violations may result in suspension of bus privilege for the remainder of school year.

**6<sup>th</sup> Safety Violation:**

Suspension of bus privileges for the remainder of school year.

**MAJOR OFFENSE (Code of Conduct):**

Major offenses endanger the safety and well-being of the passengers on the school bus. They include but are not limited to fighting, sexual misconduct, and disorderly conduct, disruption of public transportation, destruction of school property, assault, criminal mischief, and terroristic threats. Major offenses will be sent to the campus administration, which could result in suspension of bus privileges for a period ranging from ten to 180 days depending on the level of offense and prior discipline referrals. Other disciplinary consequences may also be applied including placement in the District's Alternative Education Program or JJAEP program. Law enforcement officials may be notified for major offenses, and tickets may be issued. MISD Transportation does not transport students assigned to the Behavior Intervention Center (BIC).

**PROCEDURES FOR WAITING FOR THE BUS:**

1. Bus drivers have been instructed to approach regularly scheduled pickup points utilizing amber warning lights (AWL). If the student is not visible at the pickup point at the regularly scheduled time, the driver may then turn off the AWL and proceed to the next pickup point without coming to a full stop. Therefore, it is important that students are at the pickup point 15 minutes early.
2. If a student misses their bus, they are to go home immediately or go back into the school to contact their parent or guardian.
3. Parents should instruct their children on the proper procedures to follow if they miss their bus.
4. Students are to stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.
5. When the bus approaches, students are to form one line and be prepared to load immediately.
6. Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
7. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to/from school when a child misses the bus.

**LOADING THE BUS:**

1. Do not push or shove when entering the bus.
2. Use the handrail and step up one step at a time.
3. Go directly to your assigned seat. The bus is not allowed to move until all students are seated.

**DEPARTING THE BUS:**

1. Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped.
2. Use handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus.
3. Wait for your turn to leave the bus.
4. Stay clear of the bus when the engine is started. Do not chase or hang onto the bus as it pulls away.

5. If any article drops or rolls under the bus, do not go after it. Ask the driver for help. If the driver is leaving the site, wait until the bus is gone to retrieve the item.

### **CROSSING A STREET:**

Every attempt has been made to establish bus routes that prevent students from crossing streets. If a road crossing is inevitable, the following procedures must be followed:

1. All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 10 to 12 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
2. Students are to check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
3. NEVER CROSS THE ROAD BEHIND THE BUS.
4. CAUTION: Students should be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or unloading students.
5. Cross all streets at intersections when possible and obey all traffic signals and signs on your way home.

### **ACCIDENTS OR EMERGENCIES:**

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.
3. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
  - a. The student nearest the door will be directed to open the door and hold it open.
  - b. Leave the bus in a single file, as quietly as possible.
  - c. Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
  - d. Follow the driver's instructions completely.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS:**

1. Regular bus rules apply to all school-sponsored events.
2. Discipline will be the responsibility of the building administrator and the trip sponsor.
3. Strict loading and unloading time schedules will be followed.
4. The bus must return clean from the trip.
5. At the principal's discretion, students suspended from regular transportation may not be eligible for extracurricular trips.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

1. Mansfield ISD School Bus Drivers are selected, hired and trained following rigorous selection criteria and a thorough criminal history background check. All MISD school bus drivers are certified through the Texas Department of Public Safety. Each driver has also earned a Class B Commercial Driver License. Bus drivers are required to pass a pre-employment drug test along with an annual physical and are subject to random drug and alcohol testing. MISD school bus drivers are professionals and are expected to conduct themselves as such at all times.
2. Authorized Bus Stops will be established within a reasonable walking distance of the home of every student eligible for transportation services. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Department to set designated bus stops with student safety, fairness and consistency in mind. All students should load and unload at their designated bus stop only. If a parent/guardian believes that a bus stop needs to be changed, please contact the Route Manager to discuss your recommended solution. The

decision to change a bus stop will be made only when it is in the best interest of safe transportation for that bus.

3. **Restricted Areas:** Mansfield ISD buses will not enter dead-end streets or personal property except when approved by the Director of Operations. Use of private property requires concurrence by the property owner.
4. **Video Cameras (with audio)** are utilized on Mansfield ISD school buses for the protection of all riders and the driver. School or Mansfield ISD law enforcement personnel may use this information as safety training material and/or evidence of bus safety rule violations.
5. **Proper Seating:** School buses are designed for the safety of students. When students are injured on a school bus, it is generally because they were not sitting correctly in their seat. A major design factor is the compartmentalization formed by each seat, which protects the students. Therefore, each student should face forward at all times. The student's back should be flat against the back of the seat, and the student's bottom should be flat on the seat. Legs should be kept in front of their body, with feet on the floor and out of the aisle.

## **HALF DAY PROGRAMS (Pre-K)**

### **General Procedures**

1. The Transportation Department must have a completed Transportation Request Form from the campus in order to initiate bus service for midday transportation.
2. Bus service will start as soon as possible after the Transportation Office receives the paperwork. The driver will call with a time of pick up or drop off and the day service will start.
3. Three day's notice is required for any change in a child's delivery or pick up place.

### **Morning Class**

1. Students, if eligible for bus service, will ride the bus to school with the rest of the elementary students and be picked up at the regular bus stop. Drivers will call with the scheduled time they will deliver the student from school as soon as they develop a route plan.
2. Students riding the midday bus home will be delivered as close as possible to home. The bus driver must see a **parent/guardian** or adult before letting the student off the bus. If no **parent/guardian** is seen, the student will remain on the bus until completion of the bus run. The student will then be returned to the campus. If this happens more than one time, it could result in the student not being able to ride the bus.

### **Afternoon Class**

1. A bus driver will call with the scheduled time they will pick up your student as soon as they develop a route plan.
2. Midday buses will pick students up at a designated bus stop as close as possible to their home.

3. If the bus comes by three consecutive days and the student does not ride, the bus driver will make an attempt to determine the student's status. Unless otherwise coordinated, the bus will not be back until the parent/guardian calls the Transportation Dispatch Office to confirm the student will still be riding the bus.
4. Students should be waiting for the bus at least 15 minutes prior and ready to begin loading when the bus arrives.
5. If eligible to ride a bus, the half-day afternoon student will ride the regular bus home with other elementary students and will be dropped off at the regular bus stop closest to their home. If not eligible there will be no transportation provided.