

# TCSD #1 Transportation

## Student & Family Handbook

[www.tcsd.org/transportation](http://www.tcsd.org/transportation)



Our **vision** is to be a premier district where every student is prepared to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Our **mission** is to ensure that all students have the foundation for success and are challenged to reach their full potential.

**\*Handbooks can be provided in alternate formats upon request to the Transportation Department\***

## A Letter to Families

The purpose of this handbook is to give families and students a better understanding of school bus safety and transportation operations. The goal is to communicate the policies and procedures of the Teton County School District #1 Transportation Department.

TCSD #1 provides school transportation for over 2,800 students throughout Teton County each year. Our department currently supports 10 TCSD schools with over 50 elementary and secondary routes, servicing nearly 200 bus stops. We are privileged to service and transport district students in a variety of ways including: regular and special needs school bus routes, summer school, field trips, activity trips and other services. With over 40 staff and 50 fleet vehicles, our combined daily bus routes cover over 1,800 miles totaling 130 hours each day to ensure students are transported to their homes and schools safely. The safety of every student transported depends greatly on our department, drivers and buses. It is a responsibility that we take very seriously.

Families and community members also play a vital role in educating students about safe practices and procedures. We welcome your partnership and support in enhancing safety, care and success in student transportation. **Please review all of the following information, then share it with your children. For information pertaining specifically to COVID-19, go to [TCSD.org](https://www.tcsd.org).** Even if your child is not a regular bus rider, we ask you to review this handbook. The information provided may prove helpful even if students only ride the bus on occasion (field trips, activity trips, riding home with friends, etc).

Thank you for doing your part in helping us provide safe travel for your children.

**\*Updates to this handbook can be seen in bold blue font.**

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Student & Family Handbook  
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[TCSD Statement of Nondiscrimination found HERE](#)

# The School Bus: An Introduction

For many parents and children, riding the school bus for the first time can seem intimidating. The goal of this handbook is to increase awareness and knowledge of school buses in order to ease fears or concerns you or your child may have. Though traveling to school in a school bus is statistically a much safer alternative than traveling in your family car, some parents may still have concerns. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “Students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when taking a bus instead of traveling by car.”

Some possible reasons for this increased safety are:

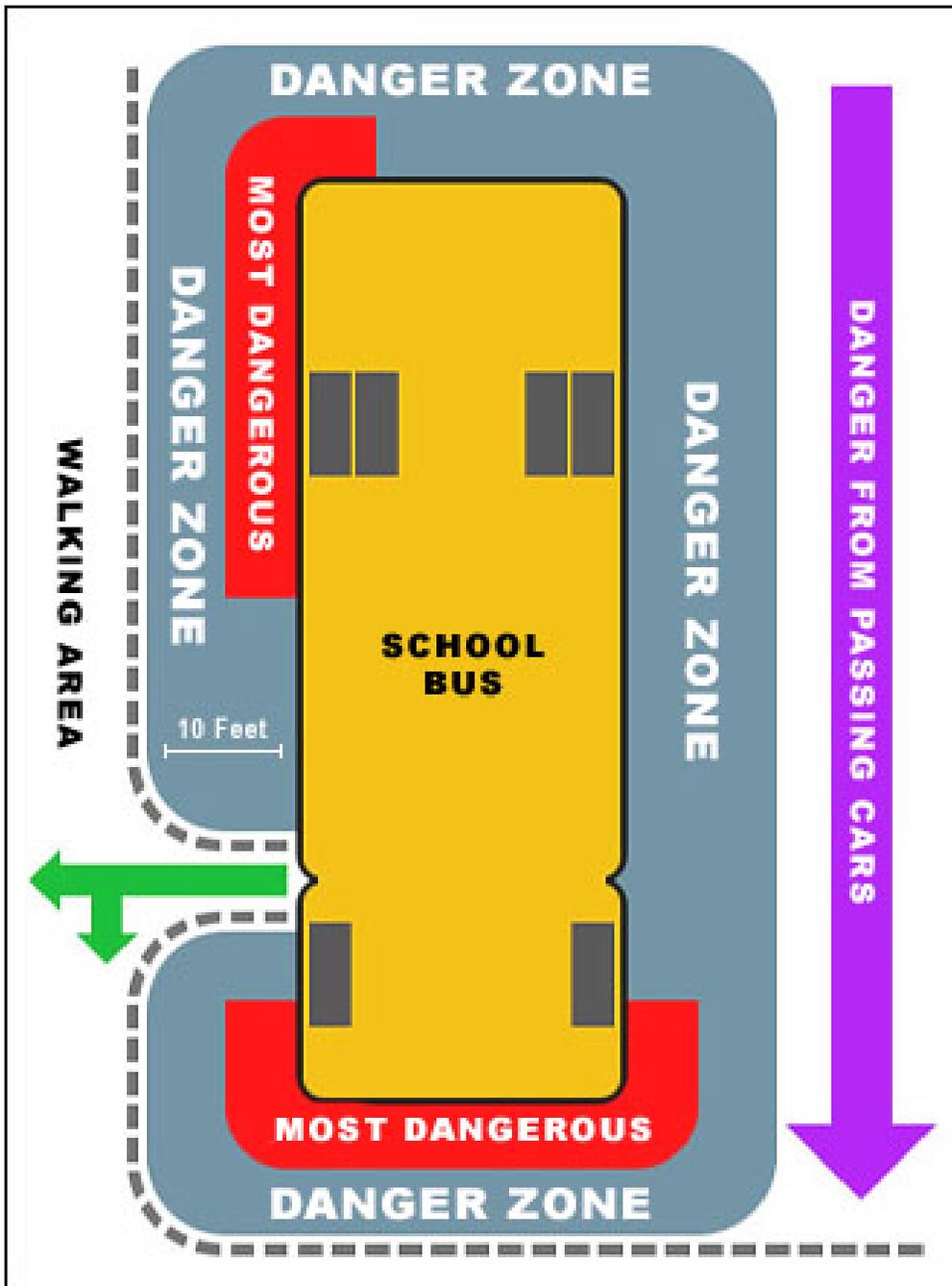
1. Design: School buses are designed with primarily one thing in mind, safety. Below are a few unique features of a school bus that assist in its safety:
  - a. *Yellow Color*: School buses are yellow for a very specific reason! The color stands out and motorists associate this color with children.
  - b. *Yellow Lights*: Lights are activated and flash as a school bus approaches a bus stop. Just like a stop light, yellow means that traffic should only continue moving if they are unable to stop safely.
  - c. *Flashing Red Lights & Deployable Stop Arm*: The school bus will activate and deploy these lights and sign at bus stops when the passenger door opens. **Please note**, if you see a bus’s red lights or stop arm, children may be in the process of loading, unloading or crossing the road! **This applies to bicycles as well as vehicles.**
  - d. *Bus Seats*: These seats are constructed for your child’s safety. Seats are padded and create a “compartmentalization” effect which protects students as the compartment in which they sit is above the typical impact point & is impact absorbing for utmost safety. It is imperative that students are seated properly for safety.
  - e. *Emergency Exits*: The average 75 passenger bus is equipped with 9 emergency exits.
2. The Law: The law is on our side. Laws in Wyoming are in place to protect your child as they load and unload the school bus, making it illegal for drivers to pass a school bus during the process, no matter the direction of travel.
3. School Bus Drivers: Bus drivers are transportation professionals and are of the highest caliber. Bus drivers receive countless hours of training to receive their commercial license and many hours each year to stay current. Please know that your child’s bus driver does their job for your child’s well-being. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the transportation office directly.
4. Parents: Parents are the single greatest contributors to their child’s safety on & off the bus. Please talk to your child about bus safety and appropriate behavior using the information provided in this handbook. Thank you in advance for your help and assistance in the safe transport of your children.

## The Danger Zone

The most dangerous segment of every bus ride occurs during the loading and unloading process. Drivers and students have little to no control over the environment outside of the bus. Because of this, students, parents, and bus drivers need to be vigilant to ensure the utmost safety for all during loading and unloading of the school bus.

This area, directly surrounding and in proximity to the school bus, is referred to as the “Danger Zone”. The “Danger Zone” is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (ten feet in front of the bus where the driver may be too high to see a child, ten feet on either side of the bus where a child may be in the driver’s blind spot, and the area behind the school bus).

**Students must always stay as far away from the Danger Zone as possible when entering or exiting the school bus. Students must only cross in front of the bus. This is of utmost importance.**



# School Bus Rules

## Bus Rules and Standards

1. Observe the **same conduct as in the classroom**.
2. **Follow the directions of the bus driver** and **never distract him or her** from driving the bus safely. **This includes any cell phone or external audio devices use that could result in distraction.**
3. Be seated immediately and **stay seated properly** keeping head, hands, and feet out of the aisle, inside the bus, and to yourself.
4. **No bullying or fighting** – always treating others with courtesy, dignity, and respect. **Students may not, at any time, take pictures or videos while on the school bus.**
5. Students will **refrain from using loud voices or inappropriate language**.
6. **Do not eat, drink, chew gum**, or have anything in your mouth on the bus.
7. **Keep the bus clean** and do not destroy any property on the bus.
8. Students are **not to throw objects** of any kind on the school bus or out the windows.
9. Students may only **carry objects that can be held on their laps** (12"x12"x12"), unless prior arrangements have been made through the transportation office. Items that do not fit in a child's backpack should be stowed in the book racks above or on the window-side of the bus seat.
10. **Deadly weapons or objects** used as weapons are prohibited on the bus.
11. Students **may only ride the bus that they are assigned to** and may only get off only at their assigned bus stop unless they have authorization from the Transportation Department or from their school of attendance (see page 10).
12. **The bus driver is authorized** to assign seats and make decisions that are necessary for the safe transportation of all students.

## School Bus Rules

The safety and welfare of student riders is our primary consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation (TCSD#1 Policy EEAC). The TCSD #1 Board of Trustees, Administration, and the Transportation department are dedicated to providing the safest transportation possible.

Bus transportation may be temporarily denied or suspended if a student chooses, through misconduct, to jeopardize the safe operation of the bus, and the safety of the children riding the bus. Drivers must give their attention to driving: therefore students riding the bus need to know and follow the rules at all times. **Student behavior may be monitored using audio/video cameras in buses.**

How rules & expectations are communicated to students and parents:

1. The rules are posted on the bus and available on our website ([tcsd.org/transportation](http://tcsd.org/transportation)).
2. The driver explains the rules to students on the bus within the first week of the school year and gives regular reminders throughout the year.
3. An informational letter and parent handbook are made available to parents explaining the rules and the procedure for discipline.
4. A school bus safety day will be performed at all elementary schools which will include a segment teaching proper student conduct on the bus.

## Items Not Allowed

Items not allowed on the School Bus may include but are not limited to the following: animals, firearms, objects used as weapons (real and toy), knives and other sharp objects, explosive items, glass objects, ice skates without blade guards, **hockey and lacrosse sticks**, baseball bats, **skateboards**, sleds, skis, ski poles, items prohibited at school, items that are too large (larger than 12"x12"x12"), **bear spray**, illegal substances, tobacco products and alcohol. Exceptions might be pre arranged for school sponsored activities that require these items.

**\*If deemed appropriate, the driver may ask students to stow or turn in items that could be a potential danger or distraction to the driver or other students on board.\***

# Student Management & Discipline

If a student does not respect the above rules, he/she may be subject to the *Student Discipline Procedure* outlined below. If a student is issued a Bus Conduct Report, it must be returned to the driver signed by a parent/guardian **before** the student may ride the bus again. This procedure assures the department that the parent/guardian is aware of the misconduct.

## Student Discipline Procedure

### Step 1. Verbal Warning

- The driver gives a verbal warning, re-teaches the rule(s), and explains why the rules are important to follow. Parent may also be called for assistance if appropriate.

### Step 2. 1<sup>st</sup> Written Conduct Report – Warning

- The driver will fill out a bus conduct report and administer to the student as a written warning.
- The driver will call the student's parent and explain the incident. He/she will also send a copy of the report, along with a clarification of the bus rules to be reviewed by the parent and student at home.

### Step 3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Written Conduct Report – 5-day bus suspension

- For all bus suspensions, Transportation Staff will communicate with appropriate school administrators to determine whether a bus suspension is most appropriate.
- The parent will be contacted by school administration or the Transportation Department.
- The driver will fill out a bus conduct report and administer to the student as a 5-day bus suspension to be signed by the parent and returned to the driver on the student's first day back on the bus.

### Step 4. 3<sup>rd</sup> Written Conduct Report – 20-day bus suspension

- Same as 5-day suspension.

### Step 5. 4<sup>th</sup> Written Conduct Report – Suspension for Duration of School Year

- Same as 5-day & 20-day suspension.

### Additional Considerations:

- The above procedure will be followed for minor offenses. For major offenses such as vandalism, driver disrespect, bullying, fighting, weapons, **possession of illegal substances, tobacco products, alcohol**, etc., the appropriate step(s) may be skipped or modified in the sequence and a behavior plan may be implemented. For all serious offenses and bus suspensions, school administration may be notified and consulted by the Transportation Department to determine the most appropriate decision for each situation.
- For all bus suspensions, students will be denied bus privileges for all TCSD routes, activities, & events for the allotted suspension time.
- Law enforcement may be notified for major offenses that are criminal in nature
- All conduct reports will be kept on file within the Transportation Department.

**Violations of any transportation procedures, including those that may jeopardize the safety of students, are subject to the *Student Discipline Procedure* & bus suspensions where necessary.**

## Bus Stops

School bus stops are planned and located with the maximum safety for students in mind. For the safety of each and every student, it is critical that parents and children understand best practices for safety at bus stops. Please take some time to review & discuss the following recommendations with your child:

- **Practice:** Practice makes perfect! If you are new to riding the bus or new to the area, try walking or driving your child to the bus stop prior to the start of school.
- **Presence:** It is highly recommended that a parent or guardian of elementary students accompany students at the bus stop both during loading & unloading.
- **Awareness:** Be aware of your surroundings, traffic, younger siblings, etc at the bus stop.
- **Distance:** Instruct your children to stay a minimum of ten feet from the bus while waiting to load and after unloading.
- **Flexibility:** Please note that your child's scheduled pick-up & drop-off times are target times. Please allow for up to a 10 minute window for these times (up to 5 minutes early or 5 minutes late) for morning and afternoon bus routes.. **Students must arrive at their bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival each morning. Parents should arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival each afternoon.**
- **Safety:** Train your child to eliminate unsafe behaviors, especially at the bus stop. For example, parents should remove all drawstrings and dangling items from clothing and backpacks. This will help prevent injury or death should they be caught on bus components. **If you miss the bus, DO NOT RUN AFTER IT. There are blind spots and the driver may not see you.** Bus drivers will work with your child to establish these procedures and routines.

Please review the following TCSD Transportation guidelines for unloading students at bus stops:

- **Safe Haven:** The TCSD Transportation Department values every student's safety and protection above all else. In light of this priority on safety, TCSD drivers do their best to release students only where there is a *safe haven* for the student upon release. A "safe haven" can be defined as: *A safe environment which may include but is not limited to being free from clear and imminent threats or dangers such as road/safety hazards, suspicious persons, or a lack of parent or authorized person for pickup.\**
- **K & 1st Grade Drop-off:** As a general best practice, TCSD #1 Transportation requests the presence or sight of a parent, guardian, or authorized person who is familiar and/or recognizable by the student for all K-1st grade students\*. Whenever it becomes evident that an adult is absent for unauthorized K-1 students, drivers will keep students on the bus and contact the Transportation Office for further guidance.\*

**\*Please note that loading and unloading is ultimately the responsibility of the student. A driver will never force a student to get off a bus at a location where they are not comfortable or authorized. Please teach your child to communicate with the driver before unloading if they are uncertain or uncomfortable.**

## Getting on the School Bus

The school bus is one of the safest forms of transportation for a student. Dangers or risks associated with school buses typically occur outside of the bus during the loading & unloading process. To limit these dangers **TCSD parents should read over the following guidelines and share them with your child(ren). Students who violate these critical safety procedures are subject to the Student Discipline Process and/or bus suspension.**

1. Students need to be ready at their bus stop **5 minutes prior** to the scheduled arrival time. (Though TCSD buses never run early intentionally, there are circumstances and factors which could lead to an early bus at times.)
2. Students are to **stand a minimum of 10 feet** from the road while waiting for the bus & must be **visible to the bus driver.**
3. As the bus arrives, the driver will activate the **“yellow” flashing lights.** This alerts traffic, students & parents that the bus will be stopping soon.
4. When the bus comes to a complete stop, the driver will activate the **“red” flashing lights** and the flashing **“STOP” sign** on the side of the bus.
5. **Students must not approach the bus until the red lights have been activated and the door is open.**
6. Students should **approach the bus in an orderly manner, aware and alert** to their surroundings.
7. Once on the bus, students should **scan their student bus card** and go directly to their seat. **All students, including JHMS, SIS, & JHHS students, must possess a bus card to ride the school bus.**
8. Students are to remain seated, face forward and remain out of the aisle until the bus arrives at school. **Students are required to wear seat belts on a bus so equipped and loss of bus privileges may result if students refuse to do so.\***
9. It is safest for school buses to only stop once. Once a bus has pulled away from the bus stop or school, your child has missed the bus and should arrange alternate transportation to/from school & home.

**\*TCSD #1 is currently in the process of implementing seat belts on district buses. Per the WDE bus replacement rules, a limited number of buses are eligible for replacement each year. Please note that buses without seatbelts are extremely safe both statistically and historically. In these buses, bus safety is based on the concept of “compartmentalization”. With compartmentalization, students are better protected by the strength of the bus, distance between the seats, and padding in the seats and surrounding area. For buses equipped with seat belts, students are required to wear them and loss of bus privileges may result if students refuse to do so.**

## Getting off the School Bus

1. Students need to be **aware of when their stop is approaching**. Do your best to prepare them to be ready when it is time to unload.
2. Students are not to stand up and approach the exit until the bus comes to a **complete stop** and the **door is opened**.
3. When the bus has stopped, students should check their seat, grab all belongings and walk to the front of the bus with student bus card in hand, ready to scan.
4. Students should **scan their student bus card** as they exit the bus.
5. When exiting the door, students should **carefully use the handrails & steps**.
6. Before stepping outside, students should pause and **look both ways** to ensure there is no oncoming traffic or other approaching dangers.
7. After offloading, students should **walk directly away from the bus** to a spot at least 10 feet away from the road.

**For loading and unloading: remain away from the Danger Zone. See Page 4.** If your child needs to retrieve an item that is near the bus or in the danger zone, please ensure that they ask the driver for help and **do not retrieve the item**. In order for a child to be in the driver's field of vision at all times, **children should only approach the bus from the front, passenger side when loading**.

## Road Crossings

All stops that require students to cross the road in front of the bus are evaluated for safety. Students will be trained with the correct procedure for safety, but it is important that parents discuss these procedures with their children to ensure the safest delivery. Students who need to exit and cross the road in front of the bus are advised to carefully follow these steps:

1. After exiting the bus, students should **walk 10 feet away from the bus door** where possible and a minimum **10 feet in front of the bus** (Out of the Danger Zone). **Students should never walk behind the bus**.
2. Students should **make eye contact with the driver**.
3. When it is safe, the **driver will motion** for the student to begin to cross in front of the bus. The **student must not begin to cross until the driver signals** that it is safe to do so.
4. The signal to cross is  or . The signal to stop is  & in emergencies the driver may use their horn.
5. Students should **begin to cross & stop at the center line**. At this point the student should look back at the driver and wait for a second signal to cross. The driver will check traffic again and motion to continue when it is safe. **It is critical that students are always watching the driver and watching for approaching traffic.**
6. Once the student has successfully crossed the roadway, they should **continue to a point at least 10 feet off of the roadway** where possible.
7. If a situation arises where a stop is determined to be unsafe to cross, the driver will make appropriate adjustments for safety.

**Parents present at a bus stop where crossing is needed are urged to participate in the above crossing procedure with your child to set a good example and to properly educate all students at the bus stop.**

## Transportation Scheduling

Every TCSD #1 student is automatically authorized & registered to ride the school bus which services the bus stop closest to their place of residence unless they reside in a No Transportation Zone. For assistance in submitting transportation change requests for your child during the school year, please see below:

If a student needs to get off at a stop other than his/her home stop, the student's parent or legal guardian can visit the TCSD Transportation webpage at [www.tcsd.org/transportation](http://www.tcsd.org/transportation) to register them. The following registrations are available on our webpage:

- **Alternate Bus Ride Request Form:** Students may be authorized for transportation to and from various bus stops on a temporary or a regularly scheduled basis. This circumstance will be granted on a space available basis for bus capacity. Please visit the Transportation Webpage to request permission.
- **Activity Bus Request Form:** Students attending Jackson, Colter, Munger Mountain, Wilson, Kelly, Moran Elementary Schools, JHMS, Summit and JHHS may ride the After School Shuttle Bus for transportation to several stops in the town of Jackson. See the District Transportation Web Page for the 2020-2021 Town Shuttle. Please visit the Transportation Webpage to request permission.

**Note: the Activity Bus is a significant privilege & responsibility for district students. Activity Bus Drivers cannot manage student schedules or ensure that students unload at the appropriate stop each day. Please ensure your student is ready for this responsibility before signing them up for this service.**

If you are unable to make arrangements via the website, parents may call the School Office and a pass will be issued that will allow the student to ride that afternoon. **Without previous arrangements, the student may only ride their regularly scheduled bus and unload only at their regularly scheduled stop.**

**ALL Requests must be submitted by 12:00 PM each day or the change request may not be granted.**

## Bus Evacuations

Each year, TCSD school buses perform routine evacuations on routes & activity trips so that all students, coaches, and drivers are prepared in the case of an emergency. If you would like more information pertaining to bus evacuations and how they are conducted, do not hesitate to reach out to the Transportation office.

## Special Medical Needs

If your child has any special medical needs or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Transportation Department so we can better accommodate your child's needs.