Accidents or Emergencies:

1. Students must follow the driver's instructions at all times. No student or employee may leave the scene unless released by a school administrator after an investigation is complete.
2. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
   - Students nearest the door will open and hold it open.
   - Leave the bus in a single file line as quickly and quietly as possible.
   - Evacuation will start with the seat nearest the front door unless otherwise instructed.

Extra-curricular Trips:

1. Bus rider rules apply to all students during school sponsored events.

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE

Riding the bus is a privilege. Video cameras will be used in district vehicles to promote compliance with the rules of conduct. Video footage or portions of video footage may be protected under Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA). Issues or concerns with the bus or bus driver must be handled through the Transportation Office and not at the bus stop with the driver.

Any means of school transportation shall be treated as an extension of the district property. Students are expected to assist the district in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely.

Willis ISD schools are consistent across the district with bus procedures and consequences for major and minor safety concerns. This is in the best interest of the students and parents. No more than two (2) minor referrals will be issued to any student during a school year, after which all referrals are considered MAJOR.

A MINOR OFFENSE IS AN INFRACTION OF THE FOLLOWING RULES; STUDENTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENGAGE IN THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS:

Students will not engage in the following:

1. Excessive loud talking, yelling, or disturbing others.
2. Not staying seated while bus is in motion in assigned seat/ not seated correctly while bus is in motion.
3. Leaving paper / debris on the bus.
4. Late to bus stop.
5. Pushing, tripping and / or hitting other students.
6. Not following driver's direction.
7. Feet and backpacks not kept out of aisles.
8. Having any prohibited items: live animals or insects, glass containers, balloons, balls, or objects too large to be carried on student's lap.
9. Inappropriate attire, no head gear allowed to be worn on the bus.

BUS PROCEDURES FOR A MINOR OFFENSE:

1st and 2nd warnings: The transportation department will attempt to contact a parent or guardian.

3rd Referral: Depending upon the offense, campus administrator will conference with child, issue consequences and contact parent.

A MAJOR OFFENSE IS AN INFRACTION OF THE FOLLOWING RULES:

Students will not engage in the following:

1. Using profanity, verbal abuse, harassment, or obscene gestures towards driver or other students.
2. Distracting driver's attention from safe operation of the bus.
3. Aggressive behavior towards other students, and / or fighting.
4. Purposely excreting bodily fluids inside and/or out of the door or window of bus.
5. Vandalism to bus (restitution will be assessed according to damage).
6. Throwing or propelling dangerous objects inside or outside of the bus.
7. Arms, head, hands or any part of the body out the window of the bus.
8. Sexual or racial language or gestures – inappropriate sexual behavior or contact.
9. Gang related activity, items, language or gestures.
10. Riding or attempting to ride any bus during a bus suspension.
11. Riding or attempting to ride any bus at an unassigned bus stop.
12. Having any prohibited item: weapons, explosive devices, matches, cigarette lighters, tobacco or vape products, alcoholic beverages, harmful drugs or chemicals.

BUS PRODEDURES FOR MAJOR OFFENSE:

No Warnings:

1st referral: Three (3) days suspension from bus. Phone contact made with parent or guardian, referral forwarded.

2nd referral: Five (5) day suspension from bus. Phone contact will be made with parent or guardian, referral forwarded.

3rd referral: Ten (10) day suspension from bus. Phone contact will be made with parent or guardian, referral forwarded.

4th referral: Thirty (30) day suspension from bus. Phone contact will be made with parent or guardian, referral forwarded

5th referral: Removed from bus for the rest of the year. Phone contact made with parent or guardian, referral forwarded.

THE ABOVE LISTED CONSEQUENCES ARE THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS GIVEN FOR INFRACTIONS. THE CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR HAS THE RIGHT TO INCREASE THE CONSEQUENCES BASED ON THE SEVERITY OF THE INFRACTION.

Willis ISD Student Bus Safety Manual 2024-2025

Student Transportation Services
Willis Independent School District
(936) 856-1220

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

The Willis Independent School District provides bus transportation to and from school as a privilege for students residing in the District. Our goal is to safely deliver each child to and from school daily. Your child needs to be registered to ride each year before school starts. This information is vital to the transportation department in case of emergencies.

To meet the conditions outlined by WISD and provide safe, prompt movement of all students, the district has adopted standard regulations and procedures, including restrictive measures for violations of rules. These are outlined for your information and for your child's guidance. You can assist by reading the Bus Safety Manual provided. We ask for your cooperation with school personnel in developing proper behavior patterns for students who ride buses.

Transportation to school is a vital component in providing a successful education. Willis ISD is committed to providing a safe transportation option for all students. School districts typically set travel distances to bus stops. At Willis ISD, we aim to keep travel distances to bus stops around one-fifth of a mile (approximately four blocks or 1,056 feet). Student travel distance to bus stops may vary due to safety concerns such as narrow, muddy, or rough roads, inadequate turnarounds, and inability to access certain areas like gated neighborhoods. Distances within apartment complexes and gated communities may also affect the distance traveled to bus stops. In each situation, stops are placed at the nearest accessible location.

If you need information concerning routes or student misconduct on buses, please call the Transportation Office at 936-856-1220 or visit us at https://www.willisisd.org/.

Thank you,
Frank Gonzalez
Director of Transportation

General Safety Rules:

1. Always obey the bus driver's instructions. No disrespectful behavior or refusal to cooperate will be tolerated.
2. Students must ride their assigned bus and get on and off at their designated stop.
3. Students are not allowed to ride home on another bus with a friend.
4. Parents are responsible for deciding how a student will get to the bus stop (i.e., walking or by car).
5. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to school if a child misses or is suspended from the bus.
6. All Students will follow the WISD dress code policy while on the bus.

Procedures for Waiting for the Bus:

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes before scheduled pickup time. The bus will arrive on schedule and cannot wait for late riders. The driver will not wait or honk the horn for individuals or daycares.
2. Stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway in a safe place while waiting for the bus. Be clearly visible to the approaching bus driver and other traffic. Be watchful and do not play around.
3. Line up at least ten feet from the curb before the bus arrives. Be prepared to load quickly and orderly once the bus comes to a complete stop.
4. Stand still and clear of the bus. Only move toward the bus after it has stopped completely, the door has opened, and/or the driver signals you to load.
5. Students who miss the bus are encouraged to go home immediately.
6. Parents should instruct their children on what procedures to follow if they miss the bus.

Loading the Bus:

1. Do not push or shove.
2. Stay out of the bus “Danger Zone” (10 ft. on the side, 10 ft. in front and never behind). Wait until the door opens or the driver gives the signal before approaching the bus.
3. Use the handrails and take one step at a time to enter the bus.
4. Go directly to your assigned seat. The bus will not move until all students are seated. Delays affect traffic and schedules.
5. The driver may assign seats to ensure a safe and orderly ride.

*** When the bus is at its stop, the area within 100 feet of the bus becomes a school bus stop zone. This means students are expected to behave appropriately in this zone to ensure everyone's safety.**

Conduct on the Bus:

1. Remain in your assigned seat at all times.
2. A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another student a place to sit.
3. Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises that may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition will not be tolerated.
4. Scuffling, fighting and the use of profane or vulgar language and gestures are forbidden.
5. Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.
6. Do not litter, mark, cut or scratch any part of the bus. The student(s) responsible for damages will not ride the bus until the school district has been compensated for those damages and bus suspension days are complete.
7. Students should only use the emergency and exit door controls during supervised drills or actual extreme emergencies.
8. Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door or other controls except in case of extreme emergency.
9. Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip, and shall keep their feet in front of them and out of the bus aisle.
10. Electronic devices, personal telecommunications, or any device with a camera may not be used to take pictures. If listening to music or playing games, earbuds must be worn. Students are not allowed to talk on a cell phone while on the bus.

Getting off the Bus:

1. Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped at your designated stop and the door has been opened.
2. Use the handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus.
3. Wait for your turn to leave the bus. Pushing and crowding can slow exiting and cause accidents.
4. Stay out of the bus “Danger Zone” (within 10 ft. of the bus).
5. If an article drops or rolls near or under the bus, do not go after it! Go to the bus door and alert the driver and ask the driver for help.

Letting off Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Students:

For the safety of our youngest riders, PK and K students must be met by a parent or authorized adult at the bus stop. The parent or designated adult must show a valid identification card, confirming they are listed on the bus registration form, to receive their students.

We recommend a parent or designated adult wait for your child to ensure a smooth arrival. If no one is present to receive the student, they will be returned to their campus. After a student has been returned to campus the second time, a bus referral will be submitted causing the student to lose bus riding privileges for (3) three days. Parents are responsible for picking up their children if they are returned to school.

Designated Stop:

Students will be picked up and dropped off only at their designated bus stop. After ten consecutive days of not using the bus service, that service may be discontinued. Only one location for pick up and one location for delivery will be allowed for every student. Any request for transportation change must be made to the campus registrar, and transportation will be notified. Transportation then will make the change if permitted. Requests received after 12:00pm will be processed the following day.

Crossing the Street or Highway:

1. All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 15 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
2. Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
3. Never cross the road behind the bus.
4. Students should be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or unloading students.
5. Students should obey all traffic signals and signs on their way to and from the bus stop.

Prohibited Items:

1. Tobacco or vape products, matches or cigarette lighters.
2. Any animals or insects, dead or alive.
3. Glass containers, golf clubs, skateboards, baseball bats, ropes, chains, weapons, explosive devices or aerosol containers.
4. Alcoholic beverages, drugs or chemicals.
5. All items, including band instruments, must be kept on the student’s lap or within their seating compartment and may not deny another student a seat, block the aisle or an emergency exit.
6. Food, chewing gum, and drinks (other than clear plastic bottled water) are not permitted.
7. All items listed in the student handbook for their school of attendance.
8. The District prohibits students from using cameras or cell phones to take pictures while on school property or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities on or off school property. When seen, district employees shall confiscate any of the devices, and are not responsible for such items.
9. No headgear of any type will be allowed on the student’s head while on the bus. We need to be able to identify all students while on the bus.