Safety is a top priority for the Scottsdale Unified School District. We are committed to putting your children first. That is true on school campuses, as well as on our school buses.

The expectation is that all students and staff will wear their SUSD-issued ID each day. If a student loses or damages their ID card, they must report to the school office or high school bookstore for a replacement ID. The Governing Board approved a $5 replacement fee.

All student IDs have a barcode that is used to scan for meals in the cafeteria and to check out books in the library.

This year, each student ID also has Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) capability. RFID is not a global positioning system (GPS) and has no tracking capability on its own. Like the RFID in your credit card and debit card, it only works when tapped. The district piloted this program last year and the Governing Board approved it.

The RFID in student ID cards is ONLY scanned so that the district's Transportation department is able to account for those students who board and exit a bus. This applies not only to those who ride the bus regularly to and from school, but also to those who attend field trips and athletic/extracurricular events. The RFID student ID will also be used in any emergency evacuation to assist with parent reunification. The RFID is used to ensure we have accounted for each child and is solely a safety measure implemented by the district.

The RFID ID card system was purchased to work in conjunction with our Transportation routing system. The transportation routing system allows parents to download an app that has the capability to track their student's school bus, that their student boarded the bus, and the stop their student exited the bus. Already during the first week of the new school year last week, the system proved invaluable and reassured several parents regarding their students' whereabouts.

RFID capability also exists in SUSD staff badges to provide building access.

FAQs
How does the RFID capability work?
The student IDs utilize passive RFID technology, which means the ID cards do not emit any signals unless one is near an RFID reader, typically within a range of 1-2 inches. Within the district, the RFID readers are only installed on the buses to record when students board or exit the bus. Each student scan is date/time stamped, and the encrypted data is wirelessly transmitted to the cloud. It's important to note that the student ID card cannot be tracked once the student moves away from the onboard RFID scanner. The bus itself is tracked using GPS, and the student's location is only recorded when they board or disembark from the school bus.

How is the solution secure?

The RFID cards are encrypted and contain a unique ID number, which is associated with a specific student rider in the backend database.

Will the Student IDs be used to track students? No, the student ID cards will not be used to track students within the school premises. While the cards have a passive RFID chip, there are no readers installed inside the school for the purpose of tracking a student's location. The RFID reader will only be used on the school bus. It reads the student's ID card as the student boards or exits the bus, logging the time and location. This measure is in place to enhance student safety, particularly for younger students who might mistakenly disembark at the wrong stop.

What information is stored on the student ID?
The student ID card only stores a 40-bit card number. No personally identifiable information, such as ID number, name, grade, campus, or social security number, is stored on the card's RFID chip.

Why is the District using RFID technology for bus ridership?
RFID technology has been chosen because it offers efficiency in quickly boarding students onto buses without creating long lines or unnecessary delays. Compared to barcodes or magnetic strip technology, RFID provides greater security as each card has a unique identifier, rather than directly displaying the student's ID number. This enables the district to deactivate a student card if it is lost or if the student leaves the district.