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## **BUS RIDER'S SAFETY MANUAL**

### Parents and Bus Riders

The goal of this Safety Manual is to help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for children and adults who ride school buses. Parents should take time to read and discuss the material in this handbook with their children. Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by the school district and should be treated as such. Student information cards are to be completed and turned in to the driver within three (3) days.

### General Safety Rules

1. Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time will a student act toward or address comments to a bus driver in a disrespectful manner or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
2. Board and leave the bus at designated stops only.
3. All students must ride their assigned buses.
4. Do not ask to ride home on another bus with a friend.
5. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to school if a child misses the bus.

### Procedures for Waiting for the Bus

1. Be at your bus stop ten (10) minutes before scheduled pickup time. The driver will not wait or honk.
2. Stand on the sidewalk or away from the roadway while waiting for the bus. Be watchful and refrain from horseplay.
3. When the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
4. Stand still and clear of the bus. Move towards the bus only after the doors open and the driver signals for you to advance.
5. If you miss the bus, go home immediately.
6. Parents should instruct their children on what procedures to follow if the bus is missed.
7. Students will abide by the rules and regulations concerning bus conduct and dress code.

### Loading the Bus

1. Do not push or shove.
2. Wait until the door opens or driver signals before approaching the bus.
3. Use the handrail and steps.
4. Go to your assigned seat quickly. The bus will not move until all students are seated.
5. The driver will assign students to seats.

### Conduct on the Bus

1. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
2. Do not change seats.
3. A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another student a place to sit.
4. Each student is expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip.
5. Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition.
6. Scuffling, fighting and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language or gestures are forbidden.

7. Do not throw objects inside or outside of the bus.
8. Do not litter, mark, cut or scratch any part of the bus.
9. Parents will be responsible to pay for any damage their child causes to any part of the bus
10. Only during supervised drills or emergency situations should a student use the emergency door and exit controls.
11. 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.
12. Students must be absolutely quiet while stopped at a railroad crossing.

### 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.
3. Wait for your turn to exit the bus. Pushing and crowding will only slow down exiting and may cause an accident.
4. Stay clear of the bus when the engine is on. Do not chase or hang on the bus at any time.
5. If an article drops or rolls near or under the bus, do not attempt to retrieve it. After the driver acknowledges and signals to you, you should go the bus door and ask the driver for assistance.

### Dropping Off Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Students

Parents or a designee must be at the bus stop to receive Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students. If there is no one to receive the PK or K student, the child will be returned to the Transportation Department. The parents will be responsible for picking up the student from that location. Students returned more than three (3) times a semester may have their riding privileges suspended until a conference between the parent and Supervisor of Transportation is held and an agreement is made. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the fourth time a 3 day suspension from the bus may be issued after a conference is held. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the fifth time a 5 day suspension from the bus may be issued after a conference is held. If riding privileges are reinstated and the student is returned for the sixth time a 1 month suspension or suspension for the remainder of the semester/year may be issued after a conference is held.

### Designated Stop

Students will be picked up and dropped off at the designated address specified on the rider contract. Only one location for pick up and drop off will be allowed. Any deviation from the pick up and drop off on the rider contract card must be requested in writing by a parent or legal guardian and approved by a campus administrator or the transportation department. The Transportation Supervisor must approve any changes made during the school year and have two (2) days prior notification of the change. Designated stops will not be made at commercial businesses or day cares.

### Crossing the Road

1. All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and stand approximately 10 to 15 feet in front of the right bumper to await the driver's signal that is safe to cross the roadway.
2. Students should look in both directions before walking directly across the road.
3. Never cross the road behind the bus.
4. CAUTION! Be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading and unloading.
5. Obey all traffic signals and signs on your way to and from the bus stop.

6. In every case possible we will prevent students from crossing a roadway. Please do not ask special permission to allow a student to do so for convenience sake.

### Prohibited Items

1. Tobacco or any tobacco product
2. Live animals or insects
3. Glass containers
4. Alcoholic beverages, harmful drugs or chemicals
5. Weapons and explosive devices
6. Any object (musical instrument, school project, etc.) too large to fit in the seat with the student on his or her lap. The object cannot deny possible seating for other students.
7. Matches or cigarette lighters
8. Food or drinks (eating and drinking is not permitted on the bus.)
9. Chewing gum

### Cellular Phones and Electronic Devices

Students will be allowed to possess cellular phones/electronic devices (i.e. iPods) while on the bus. These devices must not be heard. Phone conversations, taking pictures or videos are not permissible. If a cell phone/electronic device creates a distraction or disturbance to the driver the request may be made to put the device away in a secure location or may be confiscated. Confiscated cellular phones/electronic devices will be returned to the student's parent or guardian only. A \$15.00 administrative fee may be charged for this return. Unclaimed cellular phone or electronic devices will be disposed of after 30 days. Lost or stolen phones/electronic devices are not the responsibility of Hitchcock ISD, and no administrative effort will be spent in investigating lost or stolen phones/electronic devices.

### Accidents or Emergencies

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. If it is necessary to evacuate the bus, students will stay together in a group while re-locating to a safe area.
3. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
  - a. The student assistant will open the door and hold it open.
  - b. Students will leave the bus in a single line as quickly and quietly as possible.
  - c. Evacuations will begin with the students in the seat nearest the front door unless otherwise instructed.
  - d. Students will follow the driver's instructions completely.

### Extracurricular Trips

1. Bus riders' rules apply to all school sponsored events.
2. Discipline will be the responsibility of the building principal, the sponsor and the driver.
3. The bus must be clean prior to returning from the trip.

### Discipline

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. The bus driver will administer discipline, with assistance from the Transportation Supervisor. All school board policies that apply to student conduct and other student related activities apply to the school bus.

The following procedures shall be followed when discipline concerns arise on the bus or on an extracurricular activity:

1. The driver will attempt to correct the behavior of the student(s).
2. If the student(s) do not comply with the driver's request, the incident will be reported to the Transportation Supervisor. The driver will record the incident on the School Bus Safety Report.
3. The Transportation Supervisor will investigate the incident and notify the driver of the action taken.
4. The student will be given two copies of the School Bus Safety Report to take home for a parent or guardian signature. The signed slip must be returned to the driver. Until the signed form is returned, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus. It is the student's responsibility to inform a parent or guardian about the Safety Report.
5. A conference involving the Transportation Supervisor, the Assistant Principal, Bus Driver, and Parent(s) or Guardian(s) may be necessary.
6. The Transportation Supervisor has the authority to suspend a student's bus riding privileges. If suspension occurs, the parent or guardian and principal will be notified prior to the suspension so the parent or guardian can make alternative transportation arrangements for the student.
7. In cases of serious misconduct that may endanger the safety of the driver and other passengers on the bus, the student(s) will be removed immediately by any school official or law enforcement agent. As quickly as possible, the principal and parent or guardian will be notified of the situation. The student's bus privileges may be revoked pending investigation of the incident.
8. Conduct and safety violations will be handled at the transportation Supervisor's discretion. This may range from probationary status to days of suspension from the bus, depending on the number or severity of the violation.

#### Video Cameras

- \* Video cameras with audio recording capabilities may be used on each bus during routes or on trips.
- \* Only district employees involved with the specific incident may view the videos. Based on legal interpretations, parents, guardians, or other non-district personnel may not view the videos.

#### Appeal Procedure

The appeal process may be found in the Hitchcock ISD Board Policy book.

Immediate appropriate legal action and/or suspension from the bus will be enforced against any person participating in the following infringements:

1. Possession of firearms, a knife, or other dangerous devices will not be permitted and may result in immediate loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.
2. Using abusive, profane language on or near a bus in which students are being transported or directing such language toward the students or the driver.
3. Hindering in any manner the operation of a school bus or obstructing, unnecessarily, any roadway on which a school bus travels.
4. Making threats against or engaging in physical contact with a school bus driver.
5. When students receive:
  - 1st Offense = documentation purpose
  - 2nd Offense = probation
  - 3rd Offense may = 3 day suspension from transportation
  - 4th Offense may = 5 day suspension

5th Offense may = 1 month suspension

6th Offense may = suspension from transportation for the remainder of the year.

\* At the discretion of the Transportation Department, bus riding privileges may be suspended and/or the length of the suspension may be changed from the above discipline procedure due to the nature of the infraction.