

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY CODE

School Bus Safety Code:

The goal of the transportation department is to provide the safest and most efficient transportation network possible for the District. To do this, it is imperative that the school bus expectations of positive behavior outlined in this handbook be followed by students, parents, administrators and drivers so the safest possible riding conditions can be maintained on the school buses at all times.

Prohibited Student Conduct on the School Bus:

It is crucial for students to behave appropriately and responsibly while riding on district buses, to ensure their safety and that of other passengers and to avoid distracting the bus driver. Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior as outlined in the district's code of conduct and in accordance with this policy. Excessive noise, pushing, shoving or fighting will not be tolerated. According to New York State Law, the driver is in full charge of the bus and the students. Students must comply fully and promptly with the driver's instructions and without arguing viewpoints. Students may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the code of conduct, up to and including suspension from the bus and or school, when they:

A. Engage in conduct that is disorderly. Examples of disorderly conduct include:

1. Making unreasonable noise. Students are to refrain from loud talking, excessive noise, and unnecessary movements, which can divert the driver's attention and could result in an accident.
2. Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive.
3. Engaging in any willful act, which disrupts the normal safe operation of the school bus.
4. Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
5. Trespassing. Students are not permitted on any school bus other than the one they are assigned to while in route. Buses are not to be entered at any other time without permission of the school district.
6. Not staying seated while the bus is in motion or obstructing the aisle.
7. Eating or drinking on the bus.
8. Littering on the school bus or throwing things out the windows of the school bus.
9. Students involved in general horseplay, i.e. rough housing, play fighting, fooling around.

Note: This category would also be used when you did not actually witness the student doing something, but were told this occurred.

B. Engage in conduct on the school bus that is insubordinate. Examples of insubordinate conduct include:

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of school bus drivers, coaches, teachers or any other school employees in charge of students while riding on a school bus or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
2. Students who don't cross the road by following the instructions of the driver and or are not crossing in front of the bus.
3. Students refusing to sit in assigned seats.

C. Engage in conduct that is disruptive. Examples of disruptive conduct include:

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of school bus drivers, coaches, teachers or any other school employees in charge of students while riding on a school bus.

D. Engage in conduct that is violent. Examples of violent conduct include:

1. Committing or attempting an act of violence (such as hitting, kicking, punching and scratching) upon any person riding the school bus.
2. Possessing a weapon.
3. Displaying or threatening to display or use what appears to be or is a weapon.

4. Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of any bus riders on the bus, including graffiti or arson.
5. Tampering with mechanical equipment, accessories or controls of the bus.
6. Intentionally damaging or destroying a school bus by acts of vandalism, destruction and or marring or defacing the bus.
7. Throwing article or objects in, at or from the bus.

E. Engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others. Examples of such conduct include:

1. Lying to the bus driver or any other school personnel in charge of students while they are riding the bus.
2. Stealing the property of other students, school personnel or authorized person riding the school bus.
3. Defamation, which includes making false or unprivileged statement or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harms the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them.
4. Discrimination, which includes the use of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner.
5. Harassment, which includes a sufficiently severe action or persistent pervasive pattern of actions or statements directed at an identifiable individual or group which are intended to be, or which a reasonable person would perceive as ridiculing or demeaning.
6. Intimidation, which includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of bodily harm.
7. Selling, using or possessing obscene material
8. Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing or swearing.
9. Smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe or using chewing or smokeless tobacco.
10. Possessing, consuming, selling, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, or being under the influence of either. "Illegal substances" include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look-alike drugs, and any substances commonly referred to as "designer drugs."
11. Inappropriately using or sharing prescription and over-the counter drugs. (No drugs or prescription drugs, over the counter medicines are allowed on the school bus).
12. Gambling
13. Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body.

Consequences for Violation of the School Bus Safety Code on the School Bus:

Under Categories A, B, and C of expected behaviors under the code of conduct, consequences may be as follows:

Note: Prior to any bus referral, a student would likely have already received at least one and probably several verbal warnings and or have been assigned a seat. However, even without such prior warning, the following consequences may apply.

First Offense: Bus Referral, meeting with Principal/Dean, Parental notification

Second Offense: Bus Referral, Meeting with Principal/Dean, Parental notification and possible 1-2 day suspension from bus.

Third Offense: Bus Referral, Meeting with Principal/Dean, Parental notification and probable 3-5 day suspension from bus.

Cumulative (repeated) offenses will result in progressive bus suspensions and the possibility of the loss of bus riding privileges for the school year. Large gaps in time of inappropriate behaviors will be considered on an individual basis. For example: A student receives a bus referral in September and then receives one in February, depending on the seriousness of the offense, it may not be handled in a progressive manner.

Any of the above noted behaviors that cause a serious disruption and or jeopardizes the safety of the driver and the passengers on the bus may result in an immediate suspension from the bus.

Under categories D and E of expected behaviors under the code of conduct, these are behaviors that are considered to be so important that should they be violated, the student may automatically be suspended from the bus. Depending on the behavior, the consequence could also include suspension from school.

The consequences may be as follows:

First Offense: Bus Referral, Meeting with Principal/Dean, Parental notification and *immediate* suspension from the bus for a period of up to 5 days.

Cumulative (repeated) offenses will result in progressive suspensions from the bus and possibly the loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

*** Should the conduct of any student on the bus endanger the safety and welfare of the other individuals riding on the bus, and the offending student(s) fail to cease such conduct when requested to do so by the driver, it shall be the duty of the driver to have the offender(s) removed from the bus. The student will be taken back to the school or dropped off at the transportation office. This could result in the transportation coordinator or designee meeting the bus to remove the student.

In such cases where the student is suspended from the bus, the student's parent will become responsible for seeing that his or her child gets to and from school safely.

The Commissioner of Education has held that a board of education must be free to regulate the conduct of students being transported by the district in order to assure student safety.

A student subjected to a suspension from transportation is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law 3214. However, the student and the student's parent will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the Principal or the Principal's designee to discuss the conduct and the penalty involved.

Prior to or at the beginning of each school year, students and parents will be asked to sign a good faith agreement that reflects both the students' and parents' understanding of the school bus safety code. This enables parents to work with their children, go over bus safety rules, teach why they are in place and let their child or children know what consequence may apply if the rules are not followed.

Parent and Student Good Faith Agreement for Bus Safety

We agree that riding a school bus and being a safe bus rider is of utmost importance. Every student has the right to enjoy a safe bus ride to and from school without the worry of unsafe actions or harassment from other students. It is understood that each student bus rider will be held accountable to the school bus safety code. We have read and understand the school bus safety code and agree in good faith to abide by it.

Student's Name (print please)

Student's Signature

Grade _____

School _____

Bus # _____

Parent's Name

Parent's Signature

____/____/____
Date