

Pupil Transportation Safety Plan

The purpose of this safety plan is to provide students and parents/guardians with important information about the Merced City School District (MCSD) pupil transportation safety plan pursuant to Education Code Section 39831.3 and Vehicle Code 22122. Many MCSD transportation policies, regulations, and safety rules are included in this plan.

It is the mutual responsibility of the parent/guardian and school district personnel to make a reasonable effort to understand and cooperate with each other regarding safe and orderly pupil transportation.

Transportation of regular education students to and from school is not required by law. School bus transportation is provided only for eligible students and shall be considered a **PRIVILEGE** to be enjoyed only as long as the students accept responsibility for their own personal conduct and carefully follow all rules and regulations.

Please take time to read the following pages and review them with your children in order to protect your transportation privileges.

At MCSD we strive for excellence in Transportation services to you, our customers.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

The School District is responsible for:

1. Establishing the policies and procedures by which the pupil transportation program functions.
2. Establishing pupil regulations governing the behavior and safety of students while on the bus and at bus stops.
3. Instituting and administering an instructional program that teaches students proper conduct and safety procedures.
4. Conducting a training program for school bus drivers to ensure that all policies, procedures, regulations and their enforcement are understood.
5. Ensuring that parents receive written copies of transportation safety rules and regulations and clearly establishing their roles and obligations with respect to student promptness, attitude and behavior.
6. Initiating procedures to open lines of communication and cooperation between school administrators, transportation staff and state agencies.
7. Providing training in pupil management skills that extend beyond the scope of enforcing rules and regulations.
8. Ensuring that administrators provide support for discipline and stand behind bus driver's reasonable enforcement.
9. Formulate and implement early dismissal and inclement weather or emergency dismissal policies.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Guardians will:

1. Support safe riding practices and reasonable discipline practices.
2. Model, teach and hold their children accountable for appropriate behavior
3. Make certain that their students arrive at the bus stop on time and be responsible for their student's behavior until the bus arrives. Parents/guardians are responsible for their students going to, from and at the bus stop.
4. Provide alternative transportation for their students if oversized objects or live animals must be transported to or from school, or when a student's bus riding privileges are suspended for cause.
5. Ensure that payment is made for damages resulting from vandalism to the bus.
6. Work with school personnel to reinforce appropriate bus rider behavior.
7. Have a family emergency plan if the student arrives home early or if parents/guardians are not present at the time of their arrival.
8. Support emergency evacuations drills and other emergency procedures as set by the school district.
9. Respect the rights and privileges of others.
10. Become familiar with district policies, regulations, and principles of school bus safety.
11. Be willing show a photo ID when picking up students at other than regularly scheduled locations, when requested by a transportation staff member.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will:

1. Observe appropriate classroom behavior in order to protect their riding privileges.
2. Be courteous to others. Demonstrate responsible citizenship through positive social interactions while on the bus. Do not use profanity or be verbally abusive. Do use inside voices on the bus.
3. Remember that eating, chewing gum, drinking, smoking, and possessing illegal substances, weapons or obscene materials are not allowed on the bus.
4. Cooperate with the bus driver and follow the bus driver's instructions the first time they are given.
5. Remain seated and facing forward while the bus is in motion.
6. Extend nothing, including head, hands and feet out of the bus windows. Open &/or close windows only with permission.
7. Be responsible for intentional damage to the interior or exterior of the bus and will be charged for such damages.
8. Display proper respect for the rights and comfort of others on the bus.
9. Be on time and respect private property while waiting at bus stops. **Buses cannot wait for tardy students.**
10. Allow the bus driver to escort students across the street in front of the bus where required by state law.
11. Limit objects that are brought on the bus to those items that can be safely held by the student. Do not bring or use any items on the bus that could affect of health, safety, and security of any passengers. Examples: balloons, skateboards and live animals may not be transported on the bus.

12. Be responsible for any electronic device (cell phones, games, etc.) that they might bring on the bus. If any electronic device causes ANY driver distraction or disrupts to the safe operation of the bus, such device(s) may be confiscated by the bus driver.
13. Realize that ANY driver distraction is potentially hazardous to the safety of all passengers.

BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bus Driver will:

1. Provide safe and orderly transportation for students.
2. Establish proper rapport with students, parents/guardians and building administrators and work to ensure proper conduct and communications.
3. Establish and enforce reasonable bus rules in accordance with appropriate district policy and procedures. This includes teaching students the rules for safe bus riding and street crossing and enforcing these rules in an equitable manner.
4. Keep to the scheduled route and time each day providing conditions allow.
5. Pick up and discharge students only at their designated stops except with written permission to do otherwise. Request a photo ID of parents/guardians picking up students at other than regularly scheduled locations as necessary.
6. Assign seats as necessary.
7. Notify the office if the bus will be late in arriving.
8. Check the bus by walking from front to back to make certain it is empty after the last child exits the bus and between all runs before parking the bus.
9. Notify parents/guardians, Transportation Supervisor and the School Principal of student behavior concerns.
10. Make every effort not to leave the bus unattended with students on board.
11. Provide for school bus emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis as required.
12. Follow appropriate procedures in dealing with dangerous situations.
13. Build positive relationships in a professional, ethical manner by honoring diversity, modeling life skills, and meeting the physical and emotional needs of all passengers.
14. Escort students across the street in front of the bus where required by state law.

KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

In 2004 The Merced City School District started requiring parents or legal guardians of kindergarten students to have a receiver meet the school bus at the students designated bus stop. If there is no receiver present at a bus stop to meet the student, the child will not be released by the driver, and the child will be taken back to their school. Parents or legal guardians that wish their kindergarten students to be released from the school bus without a receiver present will be required to sign this form and check the appropriate box.

In addition to these rules Merced City School District expects receivers of students to arrive at bus stops five minutes prior to the designated stop time. This will allow buses to maintain an efficient and timely drop schedule for all students and receivers. In the event a parent or legal guardian has requested the District **not** to release their child without a receiver present, and consistently fail to be at the bus stop on time, the child may lose bus riding privileges.

WALKING TO AND FROM BUS STOPS

- Go directly to and from the bus stop.
- Use the “Buddy System” or walk in groups whenever possible.
- Plan the safest route with the fewest streets to cross.
- Use crosswalks, if available, when crossing streets.
- Look in both directions before crossing a street and always obey traffic signals.
- Watch for vehicles that might be making a turn.
- Do not dart out between parked cars or shrubbery.
- Never accept a ride from a stranger.
- Whenever possible, face traffic when walking on roads without sidewalks.
- Be extra careful during darkness or in bad weather.
- Leave home early enough so that you do not have to run to your bus stop.

CONDUCT AT BUS STOPS/LOADING ZONES

- Stand in a straight line, facing the traffic so you can see the bus approaching. Stand back 12 feet from where the bus will stop.
- Do not approach the bus until the bus stops and the driver opens the door.
- When loading the bus at school, follow the directions of the driver and/or the teacher on bus duty.
- Never go under the bus to retrieve something you’ve dropped.
- Destroying property, playing in the street or any horseplay at the bus stop is dangerous and prohibited.
- Do not bring pets to a bus stop.
- School buses can only stop at designated bus stops.
- Never run after your bus once it has left the stop.
- **Parents: If you are dropping off a student at a bus stop, park your car on the same side of the street as the bus is parked on. Do not park your car in the loading/unloading zone.**

WHEN CROSSING THE STREET

Merced City School’s bus drivers assist all pre-k and kindergarten through 8th grade students in crossing the street as they depart the bus. If you need to cross the street, make sure your driver is aware so he/she can safely prepare the bus for the crossing procedure. The bus driver should be the first one off the bus. He/she needs to activate the “Red Lights” that flash on the outside of the bus to warn cars to stop for children crossing the street.

How to determine if a student requires an escort pursuant to section 22112 CVC

If a student's home address is located on the opposite side of the street of the actual bus stop, then the student is required by State Law and District Policy to be physically escorted by the bus driver across that street and under the bus drivers’ direction and supervision. The bus driver is required to activate the school bus red flashing crossover lights and if so equipped, the stop arm, and physically get out of the

bus to assist the students safely across the street. District Policy requires ALL students who cross the street, be physically escorted by the bus driver with crossover lights and signs being activated. Prior to opening the door at each K-12 take-home bus stop, the bus driver will verbally ask students if anyone will be crossing the street that the bus is stopped. If any student(s) indicate that they do cross, the driver will then execute the established crossover procedure as prescribed by law for that stop. Students must indicate to the driver they cross either verbally or by a show of a hand signal.

Procedures for all students to follow for crossing a street or highway that the bus is stopped and for students requiring driver escorts across a street or highway prior to boarding the bus.

BOARDING:

1. Students should arrive at their assigned bus stop five minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time of the school bus.
2. A student arriving after the bus has arrived and living on the opposite side of the street that the bus is stopped on must wait for the bus driver to assist them in crossing the street.
3. Bus drivers will activate the bus red crossover lights and physically get out of the bus to assist the student in crossing.

EXITING:

1. As the bus approaches the bus stop where students need to cross the street that the bus is stopped on, students are to remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
2. Once the bus driver determines that it is safe for students to exit the bus, the driver will activate the red flashing crossover lights and stop arm if so equipped.
3. The driver will open the door, which will be a signal to the students that it is time to unload.
4. The driver will be the first to exit the bus. As the driver exits the bus, the students are instructed to wait on the bus, which is the safest place.
5. After the students exit the bus, the bus driver will verbally instruct the students to cross the street when the driver determines that it is safe to cross.
6. **Students that cross the street that the bus is stopped on SHALL ONLY cross the street in front of the bus and under the bus drivers direction and supervision.**
7. **Students are NEVER to cross the street behind the bus or wait to cross the street after the bus leaves the area.**
8. Students are to cross between the bus driver and the bus just like a crosswalk.
9. Students are to cross the road completely to the other side and out of the way of any traffic or hazards.
10. Once across, students should use sidewalks if available or use the side of the roadway. Students are to avoid other people's property and walk straight home.

Procedures for all students to follow as they board or exit a school bus at a school site or other trip location.

1. Arrive at your bus stop five minutes before the scheduled leave time.
2. Wait for your bus in a safe place – well off the road and on the same side of the road the bus picks you up.
3. Wait until the bus is completely stopped, enter your bus in an orderly manner and take your seat immediately.
4. Be courteous to your school bus driver and fellow passengers.
5. All students shall board or exit the school bus only at the students' "authorized" bus stop. "Authorized" bus stop is defined as the bus stop closest to the student's residence. Exceptions to this regulation will be permitted only on a daily basis when the student has a written statement bearing the parent's signature, and signed and dated by a school administrator. The written statement shall be forwarded to the bus driver

A current listing of MCSD school bus stops may be found on the web at:

<http://www.mcsd.k12.ca.us/sections/transportation/routes> or you may obtain them from any MCSD school or transportation office.

Procedures for school staff to follow to help ensure the safe transportation of students.

School staff members should always be involved and active in the supervision of the loading and unloading of students at school sites and on activity trips. It is the responsibility of school staff members to ensure that students during the loading and unloading procedures follow all safety rules and regulations as outlined in this safety plan.

School staff members should be thoroughly familiar with these procedures and involved in the enforcement of these procedures. If at any time a staff member is not familiar with these procedures or has questions regarding them, they should contact the Transportation Department at 209.385.6690 for assistance.

School staff members shall supervise the loading and unloading of all students. This supervision is intended to help in the prevention of possible injury to students while loading and unloading and is designed to minimize the exposure of students to unsafe conditions while loading or unloading a school bus.

1. Students while on school sites or other trip locations and prior to actually boarding the school bus, shall be the primary responsibility of the school site staff member.
2. Students shall be accountable for their own orderly conduct.
3. Students are not to run, horseplay or deviate from the walking pathways or sidewalks at loading zones.

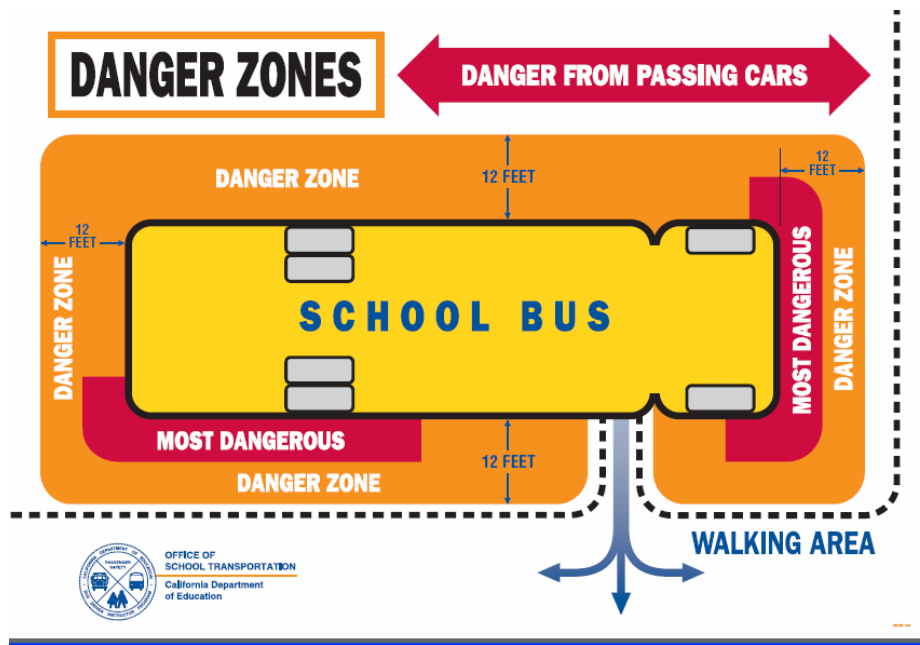
If a bus is running late to a school site or activity trip or arrives after the students have been waiting to board the bus:

1. School site members shall have students wait in a safe area and in an orderly line or group.
2. Students must remain back at least twelve feet from the school bus as the bus approaches the students.
3. Staff members shall ensure that the students do not approach the bus for loading until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver opens the door for loading.
4. Students are to board in an orderly manner and are not to run, shove or cut into the lines of other students loading.
5. Staff members are to observe the students for violations of these procedures and if needed, in accordance with District policy, discipline any student(s) that are not complying with these procedures.

Bus drivers need the assistance of school site members to ensure the level of student safety is maximized during loading and unloading.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- Use only your assigned bus stop.
- Arrange for other transportation if you must bring live animals, reptiles, insects, etc. to school.
- Refrain from transporting hazardous or destructive objects on the bus such as, weapons, firearms or any glass objects.
- Respect the rights and property of others on the bus.
- Avoid rough play while at the bus stop or on the bus.
- Always enter and exit through the front door, except in emergencies or evacuation drills.
- Remain quiet at railroad crossings.
- Keep all parts of the body inside the bus.
- Keep the windows closed unless otherwise instructed.
- Do not use profanity, make obscene gestures or create excessive noise.
- Do not damage or deface any parts of the bus, tamper with emergency exits or other equipment.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke on the bus.
- Be courteous and respectful.
- If you board the wrong school bus, notify the driver immediately so arrangements can be made to get you to your correct bus.



DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Students who violate any of the rules and regulations will receive a bus conduct report and will be subject to the normal progression and penalties. In cases of severe misconduct, students may receive penalties more severe than suggested in the normal process. All other school district rules and regulations, together with other penalties, shall apply to conduct on buses and shall be administered by the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee. The Transportation Department is responsible for notifying the parent of all violations.

The normal progression of penalties for violations of the rules and regulations on the bus are as follows:

- First Violation: Verbal and Written Warning by Bus Driver
- Second Violation: 1-day suspension from riding the bus
- Third Violation: 3-day suspension from riding the bus
- Fourth Violation: 5-10 day suspension from riding the bus
- Fifth Violation Requires parent conference prior to reinstatement of riding privileges

APPEALS

If a parent requests an appeal on the bus suspension, the following people should be present:

- Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee
- School Principal or designee
- Bus driver who cited the student
- Parent/guardian of the suspended student
- Student (if requested)

FOG DELAYS and EMERGENCY DISMISSALS

School Cancellation

While every effort is made to inform parents/guardians of a sudden unscheduled need to close the schools, there is no way to assure that every parent will receive information in a timely manner to respond in their student's best interest. A heavy fog or other emergency may result in a delayed start or early dismissal from school. School personnel make every effort to avoid sending students home outside the normal schedule.

Due to the number of students we transport and limited staff, please do not call transportation to see if there are any school delays or closings as this would tie up the phone lines. Also, please understand that we are not able to call all of the families on buses that may be delayed.

In the unlikely event of heavy fog or emergency parents/guardians and students are advised to monitor local radio and television stations for changes in school schedules. The media are contacted as soon as a decision is made to vary from the regular school schedule in order to notify parents/guardians as quickly as possible. If the weather looks threatening, parents/guardians are encouraged to stay tuned to the local news media for updates. This information will be announced on the following local radio stations:

- KMJ 580
- KYOS 1480
- KABX 97.5
- KUBB 98.3
- LOBO 97.3

Family Emergency Plans

Students and parents/guardians should develop family emergency plans. In the event of an emergency early dismissal or other unscheduled event, students will be riding on regular bus routes to regular bus stops whenever possible and but may arrive at different times than normal. Does your child have a house key or know where to find one? Does your child have a neighbor to go to in case no one is at home? Have you discussed several possibilities so your child knows what to do? Do a drill or at least a periodic verbal check to be sure your student knows what steps to take. Keep the plan updated as personal circumstances change.

Thank you for your support and cooperation



Together we will have a great school year.