

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES OR OTHER DISTRICT-PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION

M.S.A.D. No. 75-provided transportation to and from school is a privilege and not a right under Maine State Law. Improper behavior may result in suspension or revocation of the privilege to ride on a school bus or other district-provided transportation.

The law does not relieve parents of students from the responsibility of supervision before the student boards a bus or other district-provided transportation in the morning and after the student leaves the bus or other district-provided transportation at the end of the school day.

Once a student boards the bus or other district-provided transportation — and only at that time — do they become the responsibility of the school system. Such responsibility shall end when the student is delivered to the regular bus stop or drop off point at the close of the school day.

M.S.A.D. No. 75 is committed to providing a safe, orderly and respectful environment for students while riding on school-provided transportation. Students are required to refrain from behavior which would be considered harassment, sexual harassment, or bullying while riding a bus or other district-provided transportation, as described in policies ACAA-2020 – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students, ACAA-2024 – Harassment and Discrimination of Students, JIC – District-Wide Student Code of Conduct, and JICK – Student Protection from Bullying, or in school rules or student handbooks.

In view of the fact that a bus (or other vehicle) is an extension of the classroom, the Board requires students to conduct themselves on a bus or other district-provided transportation in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior.

The driver is responsible for the safe transport of all on board and will set expectations for student behavior on the vehicle. The following are examples of improper behavior.

- Excessive noise
- Changing seats while a bus is in motion
- Obstructing the aisles
- Excessive displays of affection

PROHIBITED ARTICLES

The following items are prohibited from being brought onto a bus or other district-provided vehicle:

- Matches, lighters, flammable liquids or incendiary devices
- Pocket knives, box cutters, razor blades or any sharp object designed for cutting or stabbing
- Weapons of any kind, including but not limited to firearms, ammunition, or explosives
- Controlled or illegal substances not allowed in school
- Laser pointers, strobe lights or flashing devices that may distract the driver
- Glass or fragile items that may create a hazard if damaged
- Skateboards, unicycles, bicycles, or similar equipment
- Any equipment or items which cannot be stored safely inside the vehicle

Exceptions to these prohibited items may be approved by the Superintendent or their designee.

CAMERAS

The Board recognizes the district's continuing responsibility to maintain order on school transportation vehicles to ensure the safety of students and staff. After carefully balancing the need for discipline and safety with students' interests in privacy, the Board supports the use of district-installed video cameras on district-provided transportation. In an effort to reduce student behavior violations, the cameras may be used to monitor student behavior during transport to and from school and extracurricular activities.

When video recordings are used as the basis for discipline, parents/guardians may request to view the recording of their student. Students in violation of school discipline/conduct codes shall be dealt with in accordance with established board policy, administrative regulations, and established school practices.

Notice of use of video cameras for disciplinary purposes in school transportation vehicles will be provided to all students, parents and staff in appropriate handbooks on an annual basis. Moreover, notice that video observation may take place will be posted in each transportation vehicle.

Personal cameras – both still and video – are not to be used on any school bus or other district-provided vehicle except for official business. This applies to cameras that are part of other devices, such as cell phones, tablets, or laptops.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS & TABLETS

Laptop computers and tablets may be transported to and from school, provided they are kept

stored at all times. Laptops may not be used at any time while on a bus or other district-provided vehicle.

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of items listed below may be allowed by the driver, provided they are used for their intended purposes, do not become a public nuisance or do not negatively affect the safe transport of students. These items are a privilege to use on the bus or other district-provided vehicle, and their use may be suspended by the driver at any time during transport.

- **Personal Stereos and Video Players**

Personal stereos, video players or other small electronic devices with headphones may be used throughout the ride, provided that they do not become a nuisance to other riders or distract the user to the point that he/she becomes unaware of his/her surroundings.

Volume levels are to be kept low enough so that the user can hear the driver at all times. Larger stereos, speakers, and amplifying devices such as bull horns may be brought onboard but are prohibited from use while on a bus or other district-provided vehicle. The use of headphones is mandatory; no external speakers may be used.

- **Cell Phones**

Cell phones may be used while on board M.S.A.D. No. 75 vehicles, providing the following guidelines are observed:

- Normal voice levels are maintained at all times.
- Usage does not become a nuisance to other riders.
- Vibrate mode should be used. Loud, annoying or offensive ringtones will not be tolerated.
- Video recording or picture taking with cell phones while on the vehicle is prohibited.

In cases when a student does not conduct themselves properly on a bus or other district-provided vehicle, such instances are to be brought to the attention of the building Principal by the driver. The building Principal will inform the parents immediately of the misconduct and request their cooperation in checking the student behavior.

Students who become a serious disciplinary problem on district-provided vehicles may have their riding privileges suspended by the Principal. In such cases, the parents of the students involved become responsible for seeing that their students get to and from school safely.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 20-A MRSA § 5401

CROSS REFERENCE: ACAA-2020 – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ACAA-2024 – Harassment and Discrimination of Students
JIC – District-Wide Student Code of Conduct
JICK – Student Protection from Bullying
EEA – Student Transportation Services
EEAC – School Bus Safety Program

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