

SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY BOOKLET

(Revised January 2010)

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

The Southampton Township School District has an enviable record bus safety. This record is attributed to competent, dedicated drivers and the cooperation of pupils and parents. Safety on a school bus is a matter of teamwork that requires the constant cooperation of drivers and students together with the support of the administration and parents. It is not the sole responsibility of the bus driver.

STUDENT (PUPIL) RESPONSIBILITY

School bus regulations must be obeyed at all times. Students must walk slowly and quietly in single file when walking to and from the bus. When crossing the street, students must wait for the driver to stop the bus, put on the red lights, and signal that it is safe to cross the street. Students must cross the street at least 15 feet in front of the bus, going around the safety arm.

Upon boarding the bus students must go to their assigned seat, buckle into their seat belt, and remain there until the bus reaches school. Students must wear the seat belt. It is the law!

Students must not put their hands, heads or any other part of their body or belongings out the windows. Feet must be under the seat and not in the aisle.

Students must know the location of the emergency doors and exits on the school bus. Students will learn this information from the bus driver, teachers in the classroom and through emergency exit drills that must be conducted twice per year.

If it is necessary to cross the street when returning home, walk along the curb or side of the street at least 15 feet from the front of the bus and wait for the bus driver to signal that it is safe to cross the street. Students should look both ways before crossing. Be especially cautious on stormy days when driver visibility is poor.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES WILL RESULT IN A DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE BEING IMPOSED.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents must review the school bus regulations with their child. The importance of observing the regulations must be stressed, so that the safety of all students is protected on the bus.

Parents must share the responsibility of training their child and cooperate with school officials. It is critical that parents and students view the bus driver as an important member of the school district team and treat them with the courtesy and respect due to all school personnel.

Parents are expected to supervise their children at all times prior to the bus arriving to pick children up from a bus stop and after a bus drops students off at a bus stop. It is the sole responsibility of each student's parents to either directly supervise their children or indirectly supervise them through the use of a guardian or chaperone. Children who are allowed to be independent of adult supervision remain the sole responsibility of their parents prior to the bus arriving to pick children up from a bus stop and after a bus drops students off at a bus stop.

Younger students should be accompanied to the bus stop each morning and met in the afternoon by their parents, designated guardians or chaperones for the purpose of supervising conduct and safety practices.

Students must be at their bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. It is discourteous to classmates to be late for the bus. When parents send their children late to the bus stop, the time consumed by the driver waiting for students delays the pickup time for other students on the route and delays the school arrival for all students.

Bus drivers are not permitted to stop at any location other than authorized bus stops. Do not ask the driver to stop at unauthorized locations. Any concerns or requests for a change in the bus stop are to be directed to the Southampton Township Schools' Transportation Department at 859-2256 extension 133.

No parent or unauthorized person will be allowed to enter a school bus at any time.

If there is a problem with a student or driver, please contact the transportation office or the principal of the school. Should an incident occur on the bus or at the bus stop, students should report it immediately to the driver. Parents are to report incidents to the respective building principal within 24 hours. Parents please remind your children that they are welcome to speak to their teacher, guidance counselor and/or principal if they have any concerns about riding the bus.

BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

The school bus driver fulfills three major roles; (1) skillful operator, (2) bus safety instructor, and (3) bus safety supervisor. The job of the school bus driver is challenging and difficult. He / She must be an alert and safe driver and maintain a safe environment on the bus at the same time.

Bus drivers must check their equipment at the beginning of each day to ensure that it is free of obvious hazards, clean, fueled and running. They must periodically police their vehicles

throughout the day to ensure they remain safe and to ensure that students and their belongings have arrived safely where they are supposed to be and have exited the bus. Drivers must then inspect their buses at the end of each day to ensure they are free of any obvious hazards, clean, empty of students and their belongings and returned to their garage locations until needed again for service. They are also responsible for writing up a report for service if they believe the bus needs to be checked out in any way for potential or known defects or deficiencies.

The bus driver must provide completed seating charts to the Transportation Department 's Office within one week of the beginning of the school year. If there are changes throughout the year, the seating charts must be updated and re-submitted to the Transportation Department's Office. The administration will make random checks of the buses throughout the school year to insure the accuracy of students' seat assignments as they pertain to the seating charts.

Bus drivers must instruct the students as to the school bus regulations and then be consistent in ensuring that the rules are followed. It is the responsibility of the bus driver to file a conduct report the same day that students have been issued a warning and then failed to comply with the rules.

In the event of an accident it is the bus driver's duty to maintain calm and ensure the safety of all passengers and him/ her self. This includes the need to gather information and direct appropriate activities in the event of injuries.

Given the shear magnitude of responsibilities a bus driver has, it is vital that students value the role of these school district team members.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION REPSONSIBILITY

The Southampton Township Administration is responsible for ensuring that bus safety regulations are taught in the classroom, that bus evacuation drills are conducted in accordance with the law, that a safe environment is established and maintained on all buses, and when necessary issue disciplinary consequences to students to address inappropriate behavior on the bus.

To this end, the entire Bus Safety Team consisting of the administration, principals, bus drivers, student representatives and parents have developed the following regulations and disciplinary consequences.

SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS

1. Students will treat the bus driver and other students with respect, and obey the bus driver every time a direction is given.
2. Students will wear seat belts during the ride to and from school. It is the law!
3. Students will keep their bodies and belongings inside the bus, to themselves, and feet out of the aisle.
4. Students will speak in a normal speaking voice and refrain from shouting.
5. Electronic devices, such as iPods, tape players, cellular telephones, radios, and CD players, are not permitted on the school bus. The school district will not be held responsible for damaged, lost or stolen items.
6. Food, drinks and gum are not permitted on the bus.
7. Under no circumstances are students permitted to ride a bus other than the one to which he/she has been assigned.
8. Fighting, profanity and vandalism will not be tolerated.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS WILL RESULT IN A DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE BEING IMPOSED.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

The bus driver will issue a bus conduct report when a student misbehaves on the bus and fails to comply with the directions from the driver or breaks the regulations cited above. The report will be forwarded to the appropriate school principal for disciplinary action.

The principal will interview the offender(s) and other witnesses, as necessary, to obtain a comprehensive picture of the events that have occurred. There is an audio/video camera on each of the buses. The principal may view the tape that is running in the bus to gather additional information regarding bus conduct and behavior.

The following disciplinary consequences may be imposed as the offence warrants, not necessarily in this specific order.

Warning to student and parent contacted

Loss of recess

Detention

Demerits

Saturday detention

Bus suspension

Suspension from school

Loss of privileges for school activities, such as dances, clubs, intramural activities

This policy applies to all bus runs (regular transportation, special education transportation, and class trips). This includes the wearing of seatbelts.

BUSING IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.

During a bus suspension, the New Jersey Statute (listed below) for the transportation of regular education students clearly absolves the school from transporting the student. It requires the parent / guardian to provide for the student's prompt arrival and departure to and from school for the duration of the suspension.

NEW JERSEY STATUTE, TITLE 18A:25-2:

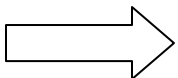
"A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the principal, and his / her parents shall provide for his / her transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion."

This booklet is being published as part of the school district's ongoing effort to provide the safest transportation possible for the students, their families and district employees.

Safety is a responsibility each of us shares. We ask that you fully review this booklet with your child to help ensure the safest transportation system possible. We know you share our concern over each child's safety and look forward to working together to this end.

PLEASE REVIEW THE FOLLOWING WITH YOUR CHILD:

- *My child(ren) and I have read the Southampton Township School District's Bus Safety booklet and agree that safety is very important.*
- *We understand the contents of the Bus Safety booklet.*
- *We have reviewed the bus safety regulations and disciplinary consequences.*
- *I will stress the importance of bus safety to my child and he / she will comply with the bus safety rules.*
- *We understand that the riding of a school bus is a privilege, not a right, and doing so depends upon my child(ren)'s behavior and that he / she / they will be held accountable for their behavior.*



IMPORTANT...SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DO NOT SIGN HERE

Please complete the **School Bus Safety** section on the **Parental/Guardian Agreement/Permission Signature Form**.

Your signature on the Parental/Guardian Agreement/Permission Signature Form indicates your agreement with the terms and conditions listed above.

PLEASE NOTE: **ALL Students** and their parents must review the School Bus Safety Booklet, even if they are walkers or parent pick up, as all students will ride a bus sometime throughout the school year for field trips.