COLDSPRING-OAKHURST CISD

BUS RIDER'S HANDBOOK

2026–2027

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"Trojans First – Shaping the Future Together"

www.cocisd.org | (936) 653-1115

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Introduction

This Bus Rider's Handbook is designed to ensure the safety of all COCISD bus riders. Riding the school bus is a privilege provided by the school district and should be treated as such.

> **IMPORTANT:** The student information document and parent/student acknowledgment of this Bus Rider's Handbook must be completed and signed within 5 days of receipt. Failure to comply will result in loss of bus-riding privileges.

To the Bus Rider

Students who have the privilege of bus transportation are under the authority of Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD and must obey all instructions from bus drivers as if they were classroom teachers. The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and all classroom rules apply on the bus. School bus discipline will be administered by the principals of the student's campus, and all school board policies regarding student conduct apply to school bus transportation.

It is each student's responsibility to help make the trip pleasant and safe for all riders.

To the Parent/Guardian

The school bus is essential to providing quality education. Riding the bus helps students learn safety, responsibility, independence, and courtesy. Please review this Bus Rider's Handbook with your child so they understand what both you and COCISD expect of them.

General Rules

The following rules are in place to ensure the safety of all students, drivers, and the community. Riding a school bus is a privilege, and students are expected to follow all Transportation Department rules and procedures.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful, and orderly manner at all times while riding the school bus.

- Students shall be respectful and courteous to the bus driver, bus monitor, and fellow students.
- Profanity, bullying, fighting, horseplay, harassment, or any behavior that distracts the driver or creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated.

- Students must follow the driver's instructions promptly and without argument.

SAFETY NOTICE

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of everyone on the bus. Failure to follow the driver's directions may result in disciplinary action and/or suspension of bus riding privileges.

Seating Assignments

To promote student safety and accountability, seating assignments are established by the bus driver.

- Students must sit in their assigned seat for the entire route unless directed otherwise by the driver.
- Drivers may change seating assignments at any time to address safety or disciplinary concerns.

Assigned Bus Stops

Students are required to use only their assigned transportation location.

- Students may board and exit the bus only at their designated bus stop.
- Students are not permitted to ride home on another bus or to a different stop with a friend.
- Parent or guardian notes requesting a transportation change will not be accepted.

SAFETY NOTICE

Transportation changes must be approved through the Transportation Department in accordance with district procedures.

Missed Bus

Students should be at their designated bus stop at least 10 minutes before their scheduled pickup time.

- If a student misses the bus, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide transportation to school.
- Missing the bus is not considered an excused absence from school.

Parent and Visitor Expectations

The safety of students and drivers requires that access to school buses remain restricted.

- Parents, guardians, and other unauthorized individuals are not permitted to board a school bus.
- Only authorized school personnel may enter a school bus.
- Questions or concerns regarding transportation services or a driver's actions should be directed to the Transportation Department.
- Bus stops are not an appropriate place to discuss concerns with the driver. Drivers must remain focused on student safety and maintaining their route schedule.

SAFETY NOTICE

If an unauthorized person boards a school bus, the driver will immediately notify the Transportation Department. The Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Police Department or the San Jacinto County Sheriff's Office may be contacted. Bus video recordings may be reviewed and used in the investigation of possible criminal trespass or other violations.

Inactive Bus Stops

To maintain efficient routing, inactive bus stops will be removed from the route.

- If a student does not ride the bus for three (3) consecutive school days without prior notification, the driver will discontinue stopping at that location.
- To resume transportation services, the parent or guardian must contact the Transportation Department before the student can begin riding again.

Smart-Tag System

Required: All students must carry their Smart-Tag when riding the bus and scan it when boarding and exiting.

NEW SAFETY POLICY: NO BADGE, NO RIDE

It is important that students have their ID badges every time they enter and exit the bus. Students who enter the bus without their Smart-Tag will be administered the following consequences:

1. 1st Offense: Documented warning (must be signed by parent)
2. 2nd Offense: Student will receive an official write-up
3. 3rd Offense: One (1) day bus suspension
4. 4th Offense: Three (3) days bus suspension
5. 5th Offense: Extended bus suspension (administrator discretion)

For more information, visit www.cocisd.org/SMART-tag — Contact: tcaldwell@cocisd.org | (936) 653-1194

Replacement Policy

- Lost Smart-Tag: $5.00 replacement fee
- Lanyard/plastic holder: $1.00 each

Questions? Contact the Transportation Department at (936) 653-1112.

Special Requirements for Young Students

Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade: All students in these grades must be met by a parent/guardian or emergency contact at their bus stop. These students cannot exit the bus alone. The person receiving the student must be listed in the student's file at school. A sibling in 3rd grade or higher may receive a 2nd-grade or younger student.

What happens if no one is available to receive a young student?

The student will be returned to their campus or transportation department. The school will attempt to contact emergency contacts until 5:30 P.M. If no contact is made, the district or local authorities will be notified to assist in contacting parents.

Transportation Policies

Pick-up and Drop-off Locations

- Students will only be transported to and from their assigned bus stop.
- No changes to bus routes or stops are permitted without authorization.
- Students will only be transported to the physical address on file at school.
- Friends cannot ride home with friends or get off at a friend's stop.
- Students found on an unassigned bus will be returned to campus or the Transportation Department.

Address Changes

All address and phone number changes must be reported to both the campus and the Transportation Department.

Private Property and Road Conditions

- School buses will not travel or turn around on private property.
- If a road becomes unsafe, the stop will be moved to the closest safe location.
- During severe weather, COCISD Police, Transportation Department, County Sheriff Deputies, and County Commissioners monitor road conditions.

Students with Disabilities

Students with an IEP or 504 Plan who require transportation accommodations (such as specialized equipment, lift service, or additional assistance) should have those needs coordinated through their campus's special education office in advance of the school year.

Bus Stop Procedures

At the Bus Stop

- Arrive early: Be at your designated bus stop at least 10 minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
- Stay safe: Stand on the sidewalk or at least 10 feet back from major roads/highways.
- No running: If you miss the bus, go home immediately and arrange alternate transportation.
- Be ready: Exit vehicles and be prepared to board as the bus approaches (except during rain).
- No horseplay: Running, fighting, or shoving is prohibited.
- Wait properly: Stand clear until the bus comes to a complete stop.

Loading the Bus

- Form a single file line.
- Do not push or crowd other students.
- Use the handrail on the steps.
- Go directly to your assigned seat and fasten your seatbelt.
- All students will have assigned seating.

Conduct on the Bus

Required Behavior

- Remain seated while the bus is moving, facing forward with feet on the floor.
- Stay in your assigned seat unless instructed otherwise by the driver.
- Use normal conversation volume only.
- Be courteous to the driver, fellow students, and passersby.
- Keep the bus clean and undamaged.

Prohibited Behavior

- Loud noises, fighting, or use of obscene, vulgar, or profane language or gestures.
- Spitting or throwing objects inside or outside the bus.
- Extending any part of your body or objects out of the windows.
- Marking, cutting, or scratching any part of the bus.
- Using emergency doors or exit controls except during drills or actual emergencies.
- Taking pictures or videos on the bus.

Note: Law enforcement will be called regarding any fighting on the school bus.

Getting Off the Bus

Safety Procedures

- Stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Use the handrail when exiting.
- Do not push or crowd while leaving.
- Elementary students (2nd grade and below): Someone must be home to receive you, or you must have a signed form allowing you to get off with no one present.

Consequences for Unattended Young Students

If no one is home to receive an elementary student, the child will be returned to their campus or the Transportation Department for pickup. On the third offense, the student could lose bus privileges for up to one week.

Street Crossing Safety

Critical Safety Rules

- **NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO CROSS HIGHWAYS – NO EXCEPTIONS**
- **NEVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS**
- Be alert for vehicles that do not stop for the bus.
- When crossing is necessary, cross in front of the bus as instructed by the driver.

Prohibited Items

The following items are not allowed on the bus:

- Tobacco products (including vapes, e-cigarettes, regular cigarettes, pouches, etc.)
- Animals or insects
- Glass containers
- Alcoholic beverages
- Weapons or dangerous objects (including fireworks, knives, water guns, or any object that could compromise safety)
- Matches or cigarette lighters
- Food and beverages (except bottled water)
- Bottles or cans (full or empty, except water bottles)
- Laser pens or pointers

Transportation of School Items

Band instruments: Allowed if they fit in the student's lap or under the seat. Instruments may not block aisles or take another student's space.

Responsibility: Neither the bus driver nor the district is responsible for items left on the bus.

Fundraiser items: Parents are responsible for transporting these items to and from school.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices (cell phones, games, video players, computers, etc.) are allowed on the bus but:

- Cannot be disruptive or cause safety concerns.
- Taking pictures and/or videos is prohibited.
- No inappropriate, offensive, or vulgar material is allowed.

Zero Tolerance Policy

COCISD provides transportation only to eligible students enrolled in the district. Our primary goal is safe and orderly transportation. The district will not tolerate misconduct while students are loading, unloading, or riding the school bus.

Riding the Bus Is a Privilege That May Be Revoked For:

- Failing to observe proper safety rules
- Disregarding the authority of the bus driver or other adults
- Behaving in a disorderly, distasteful, or unsafe manner
- Creating excessive noise
- Abusing, defacing, or destroying bus property (restitution required)
- Handling emergency equipment
- Throwing articles within the bus, out windows, or at vehicles

Disciplinary Procedures

Violation Consequences

Elementary (Pre-K through 2nd grade): Consequences apply within the semester. 3rd through 12th grade: Consequences apply within the current school year.

1. First Violation: Campus administrator conferences with student; parent/guardian notified
2. Second Violation: 2-day bus suspension; parent/guardian notified
3. Third Violation: 4 consecutive school days bus suspension; parent/guardian notified
4. Fourth Violation: 8 consecutive school days to the remainder of the semester bus suspension; parent/guardian notified
5. Fifth or Subsequent Violation: Suspension for the remainder of the school year; parent/guardian notified. Re-admittance follows the procedure below.

Important: Parents are responsible for providing transportation during bus suspensions. This is not a suspension from class. Absences due to lack of transportation after the bus suspension are unexcused.

Re-admittance Procedure

Before readmission after a fifth or subsequent offense, parents must contact the student's principal and ensure that the student's behavior will conform to rules and regulations. Students who enter the bus after being excluded for willful misbehavior will be excluded for an additional 16 school days.

Emergency Transportation Changes

For emergency transportation changes (early pickup or alternate pickup instead of bus), requests must be:

- Made via email from an address on file with the district
- Received no later than 2:00 P.M. on the day of the change
- Sent to the appropriate campus office:
  - James Street Elementary: jse@cocisd.org
  - Coldspring Intermediate: cis@cocisd.org
  - Lincoln Junior High: ljh@cocisd.org
  - Coldspring-Oakhurst High School: cohs@cocisd.org

Accidents or Emergencies

Emergency Procedures

- Follow the bus driver's instructions
- Do not touch emergency equipment unless instructed
- If evacuation is necessary, keep your hands free and leave everything behind
- If jumping from the bus, keep your knees slightly bent and move quickly away from the exit
- Stay in a group away from danger

Video Surveillance

Video cameras are used on all buses. Videos may be viewed by:

- Transportation Supervisor
- Campus Principal and Assistant Principal
- Administrative personnel
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Court-ordered subpoenas

Privacy Notice: To protect the privacy of all students on the bus, parents will not be permitted to view raw video footage. Questions about a specific incident involving your child should be directed to the campus principal or the Transportation Department.

Contact Information

Transportation Dept.	P.O. Box 39, Coldspring, TX 77331
Office Hours	5:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., Monday through Friday (school days)
Phone	(936) 653-1112
Tammy Caldwell	Director of Transportation — (936) 653-1194 — tcaldwell@cocisd.org
Beverly Tucker	Secretary — (936) 653-1112 — btucker@cocisd.org

For permanent bus route changes (due to residence change), email Tammy Caldwell or Beverly Tucker at the addresses above.

Quick Reference: Bus Safety Rules

1. DO NOT behave disruptively or make excessive noise
2. DO NOT put any part of your body outside the bus windows
3. DO NOT throw objects out windows or on the floor
4. DO NOT touch emergency doors, windows, or tamper with the bus
5. DO NOT use unsafe items like school supplies (pens, pencils, scissors, compasses)
6. DO NOT eat or drink on the bus (except bottled water)
7. DO NOT use or possess tobacco products, e-cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol

8. DO NOT use profanity of any kind
9. DO NOT damage bus seats
10. STAY SEATED AT ALL TIMES — Remain seated for the entire trip in your assigned seat

Acknowledgment Form

Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD School Bus Rider's Acknowledgment

We have read and discussed the School Bus Rider's Handbook, and we agree to abide by the rules, including the Smart-Tag “No Badge, No Ride” requirement. We realize there are consequences for failure to obey the rules. We understand that bus video/audio recordings may be made while riding the bus, and these records may be viewed by administrative personnel and law enforcement officers.

Student's Printed Name:

Student's Signature and Date:

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name:

Parent/Guardian's Signature and Date: