

Okanogan School District

Student Safety Walking, Biking, and Riding Buses to School

Student Conduct on Buses

Any misconduct by a student, which, in the opinion of the bus driver or bus supervisor, is detrimental to the safe operation of the bus, may be cause for the Transportation Supervisor to suspend the transportation privilege. A report of the incident will be kept on file.

Rules of conduct for students riding buses:

- A. Students will obey the driver and any aide assigned to the bus by the district. The driver is in full charge of the bus and passengers and will be obeyed. If an aide is assigned to the bus by the district, he/she will also be responsible for the safe operation of the bus. When transporting classes or teams, the teacher or coach will be primarily responsible for the behavior of the students. Students will obey the driver, aide, and the teacher, coach, or other staff member.
- B. Students will ride only on their assigned bus unless written permission to do otherwise has been received by school officials.
- C. Students will not be permitted to leave the bus except at their regular stop unless written permission to do otherwise is received by school officials.
- D. Students assigned seats will use only that seat unless permission to change is authorized by the driver.
- E. Students will observe rules of classroom conduct while riding on buses. Noise will be kept down to avoid distracting the driver. Students will refrain from the use of obscene language or gestures.
- F. Students will not smoke or ignite lighters or matches on buses.
- G. Students will not eat on buses, except when specifically authorized and supervised by and accompanying teacher, coach or other staff member. Buses will be kept clean.
- H. Students will not open bus windows without the driver's permission.
- I. Students will not extend any part of their body out of bus windows at any time.
- J. Students will not carry or have in their possession items that can cause injury to passengers on the bus. Such items include, but are not limited to, sticks, breakable containers, weapons or firearms, straps or pins protruding from clothing, large, bulky items which cannot be held or placed between legs, etc. Books and personal belongings will be kept out of aisles.
- K. Students will not have animals on buses, except one providing assistance to a disabled student.
- L. Students will not sit in the driver's seat or to the immediate right or left of the driver.
- M. Students will refrain from talking to the driver unless necessary.
- N. Students will go directly to a seat once inside the bus and remain seated at all

times unless the driver instructs otherwise.

- O. Students will get on/off the bus in an orderly manner and will obey the instructions of the driver or school safety individuals on duty. There will be no pushing and shoving when boarding or leaving the bus. Once off the bus, students will adhere to rules for pedestrians.
- P. Students will never cross the roadway behind a bus unless they use pedestrian crosswalks or traffic lights.
- Q. Students will stand away from the roadway curb when any bus is approaching or leaving a stop.
- R. Students going to and from their bus stops where there are no sidewalks will walk on the left-hand side of the roadway facing oncoming traffic. Students will go directly to their home after leaving the bus.
- S. Students will use lap belts on buses when available.
- T. Students will follow emergency exit drill procedures as prescribed by the driver.
- U. Students will not tamper with emergency doors or equipment.
- V. Students will remain quietly seated, not exhibit disruptive behavior and turn off all noise- making devices while on the bus.
- W. Parents of students identified as causing damage to buses will be charged with the cost of the incurred damage. Students causing the damage may be suspended from transportation.
- X. Student misconduct may constitute sufficient reason for suspending transportation privileges.

Disciplinary Procedures

Bus drivers are responsible for correcting students whose abusive behavior results in a bus-incident report or violates the rules above. The principal or designee will provide supervision during bus arrival and departure times and receive reports (written and oral) from the drivers.

The bus driver and Transportation Supervisor will ensure that students comply with the specified regulations. The Transportation Supervisor must maintain open lines of communication among school officials, bus drivers, and the transportation department.

When waiting for a bus, or going to and from a bus stop, students are responsible for conducting themselves according to the social and legal mores that apply to adults in public. That is, they must not abuse or cause damage to private or public property; they must not use obscene language or gestures; and they must not engage in criminal activity. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in formal complaints by citizens which may be forwarded to the Transportation Supervisor for possible corrective action.

Students provided with transportation are responsible for complying with the district's rules of conduct for students riding buses. Failure to adhere to these rules, or abusive behavior towards the public, driver, fellow passengers or the vehicle constitutes justification for initiating corrective action against a student.

Abusive behavior on the part of a student riding a bus may result in a written report when, in the opinion of the driver, there has been an infraction of the rules applicable to student

conduct. The written report is the primary means by which a driver communicates a student's conduct to the student's legal guardian and transportation department. This report, in most cases, reflects an infraction of rules which is repeated by the student after his/her having received previous oral warnings from the driver or bus supervisor. In order for drivers and bus supervisors to effectively maintain control of their buses, it is expected that action be exercised by the Transportation Supervisor when receiving such a report.

When a student's conduct constitutes an infraction of the rules, the driver will complete a report on the student describing the incident or damage that occurred. The driver will provide the student with a copy of the report and hand the original report over to the Transportation Supervisor. The copy of the report concerning special education students will be given to the Transportation Supervisor for disposition. The Transportation Supervisor, upon receiving the report, will investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and take action according to Board Policy 3241 – Student Discipline.

The action taken by the Transportation Supervisor will be annotated on the report and forwarded to the student's parent for signature. As with all school transportation decisions, there is no appeal beyond the Transportation Supervisor.

Drivers may be advised to file assault and battery charges against students who physically assault them. Under no circumstances will the driver retaliate in kind and physically assault the student as this conduct may subject him/her to legal action.

The student or parent of a student who has been expelled from receiving transportation entitlements may appeal the Transportation Supervisor's decision by submitting a written statement to the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee will render a decision within five working days after evaluating the issues and facts involved.

Emergencies

The Transportation Supervisor will review the contents of the School Bus Driver's Handbook with each driver prior to the beginning of each school year. Each driver, in turn, is expected to follow the procedure as outlined in the handbook. At the start of each field trip or extracurricular trip, the school bus driver will review with all passengers the location and use of the emergency exits, emergency equipment and any district emergency procedures.

In the event of a collision, the driver will make contact with the Transportation Supervisor who will:

- A. Determine the nature of the collision;
- B. Contact emergency services if there is reason to believe that there are injuries which require immediate attention;
- C. Contact the state patrol regarding the accident;
- D. Advise the superintendent of schools;
- E. Investigate the collision and gather the names of all students and witnesses;
- F. Dispatch another bus to transport the student to their destination; and
- G. Contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of any students who are injured.

To facilitate the responsibilities assigned to the transportation department, the supervisor will compile a list of students, including addresses and phone numbers that are authorized to ride each bus route.

RELEASE OF PRESCHOOL, TK, AND KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS AT BUS STOPS

A Preschool, TK, or Kindergarten student shall not be released from a school bus or other district transportation vehicle at the student's designated drop-off location unless a parent, legal guardian, or district-approved responsible adult is present to receive the student, except as provided by the Older Sibling Exception below. Unless an approved exception applies, the responsible adult shall be at least 18 years of age.

Older Sibling Exception

A parent or legal guardian may request, in writing, that a specifically identified older sibling be authorized to receive a Preschool, TK, or Kindergarten student on a regular basis. Such authorization shall be subject to district approval and completion of the district's Older Sibling Bus Release Authorization. Parents may call or send a note on a limited basis for older siblings to accompany a Preschool, TK, or Kindergarten student, but if a pattern develops, the written form must be filled out and filed with the District.

If the required parent, guardian, responsible adult, or approved older sibling is not present, the student shall remain under district supervision and shall not be left unattended at the bus stop. The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures for parent notification, continued transportation, and safe return or transfer to an appropriate district-designated location.

Safety and Administrative Authority

The school bus driver retains responsibility for safe unloading and may decline to release a student when an immediate safety concern exists. The district may deny, suspend, or revoke an older-sibling authorization when necessary for student safety, compliance with district policy or applicable law, or an individualized student plan.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining current contact and authorization information, ensuring that an approved receiver is available at the designated stop, and promptly notifying the district of changes affecting transportation arrangements.

Management Resources: 2014 – August Issue
2023 – July Issue

Latest Revision Date: 08.18.26
Previously Revised Dates: 02.20, 3.30.26