

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION/BUS POLICY

Students who ride the school bus may do so as long as they display safe and reasonable behavior. Choosing and/or continuing to follow unacceptable behavior will result in loss of bus service. The bus driver is responsible for the safety and discipline of the students on the bus. The school administrator, in accordance to this policy, will determine consequences of misbehavior and the reinstatement of bus service for the offending students should a suspension become necessary. A suspension applies to all buses unless otherwise designated by school officials. The responsibility for student supervision by the school shall begin when the student boards the bus in the morning and is retained until the child leaves the bus at the end of the day. Riding the school bus is a privilege not a right, and may be revoked for safety and discipline infractions.

I. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Parents and guardians will be responsible for instructing their child in safe school bus ridership practices. If the student violates the school bus policy, the parent will provide transportation for their child. Students will be picked up and dropped off at their designated stop. Exceptions will require a written request from the parent to the principal for initialing and presentation by the student to the bus driver. In emergency or other special circumstance a phone call by the parent to the principal and subsequent written approval from the principal to the bus driver will be acceptable.

The Transportation Department will print and distribute copies of the Irwin County Code of Behavior Discipline Policy to each school, teacher, and student. The school bus student Code of Behavior Discipline Policy will also be published each fall in the Student Handbook. The teacher or bus driver will provide the student with a letter to be included with the School Bus Discipline Policy for the parent to read and review with the student, then return signed by the parent and student to the teacher or bus driver. This letter will become part of the documentation required by the building principal to ensure that all students and parents understand the policy.

The school bus ride is an extension of the school day and is subject to all school policies and procedures. Bus Conduct Reports will be recorded in accordance with all other school record keeping procedures.

II. Transporting of School Related / Non-related Items

No animals or any other dangerous or objectionable nature items will be transported in the school bus when children are being transported. Baseball and softball bats, hockey sticks, skateboards, or any other unacceptable recreational equipment will not be allowed on regular buses. Band instruments that will be allowed on the bus are those that are small enough to be held in the students lap. Instruments may not be in the aisle or take the space of a student if that space is needed to sit down. Damage to personal items is not covered by the school bus insurance coverage.

III. Behavior Guidelines

Each infraction of class I and II offenses shall be reported by the driver to the respective school principal.

A. Class I Offenses

1. Eating or drinking on the bus.
2. Out of seat while bus is in motion.
3. Loud noise (should be classroom behavior)
4. Horseplay.
5. Possession of unacceptable material, obscene gestures.
6. Profanity.
7. Yelling out the bus window.
8. Riding unassigned bus without signed note from parent and signed by school administrator.
9. Checking mailbox while bus is still in sight (Area is in danger zone).
10. Other offenses as reported by the driver or Administrator, including but not limited to, the use of electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones; pagers, audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. Also using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus. Cell Phone use is prohibited unless authorized by the bus driver.

B. Class II Offenses

1. Profanity (directed at the driver), verbal abuse and harassment (directed at student or driver).
2. Body parts out of window.
3. Throwing / shooting of any object.
4. Physical aggression against any person.

5. Use of tobacco and any controlled substance.
6. Destruction of school property (vandalism) - suspended until restitution is made.
7. Loading or unloading buses improperly.
8. Lighting of matches, fireworks, or any flammable object or substance.
9. Unauthorized entering or leaving bus through emergency door.
10. Tampering with any portion of bus or equipment on bus.
11. Riding of any bus after being suspended from one.
12. Fighting (of any kind) treated as Class II 3rd offense.
13. Other offense committed on any bus outside regular transportation to and from school (shuttles, activity, field trip) will carry a minimum penalty of a Class II 1st offense.

IV. Consequences of Class I and II Offenses (Grades 6-12)

- A. Class I
 - 1st Offense: Warning (Call Parent).
 - 2nd Offense: 3 to 5 day suspension from bus.
 - 3rd Offense: 5 to 10 day suspension from bus.
 - 4th Offense: 10 day suspension from bus.
 - 5th Offense: Loss of bus services (for one full grading period or remainder of year).
- B. Class II
 - 1st Offense: 3 to 5 day suspension from bus.
 - 2nd Offense: 5 to 10 day suspension from bus.
 - 3rd Offense : 10 day suspension from bus.
 - 4th Offense: Loss of bus service.

The Irwin County Board Policy requires a meeting between appropriate school district officials and the parent or guardian of any student found to have engaged in bullying, physical assault or battery on a school bus for the purpose of forming a school bus behavior contract for the student. The contract must provide for progressive age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Contract provisions may include but shall not be limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus. **All assigned consequences are subject to administrative review.**

V. Other

- A. A driver shall not cause a pupil to get off the bus at any place other than home or school.
- B. Bus drivers are expected to attend all meetings or clinics for drivers held during the year.
- C. The mechanism of the bus shall be decided daily by the bus driver. Brakes, steering, lights, windshield wipers, tires, and form should be in good condition.
- D. In crossing a railroad track, the bus driver shall bring his/her bus to a complete stop, open the door, and observe all safety procedures.
- E. Stops shall be established by the superintendent with proper input from staff.
- F. When children who live on the opposite side of the road are being picked, they shall be instructed to remain on their side until the bus has stopped, the mechanical stop signal has been extended, and the door has opened. The same procedure shall be followed when students are being left off after the school day. The door shall be left open until the student has crossed the highway safely.
- G. Bus drivers shall not permit pupils to get on or off buses while it is in motion.

Bus Riding Rules

- A. Obey the bus driver at all times. Bus drivers are authorized to assign seats.
- B. Be courteous, no profanity.
- C. Eating or drinking is prohibited.
- D. Do not throw objects or litter on the bus.
- E. Cooperate with the driver.
- F. Stay in your seat, face the front, and keep the aisle clear.
- G. Do not be destructive.
- H. Windows are to be opened only with the driver's permission.
- I. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
- J. Do not throw objects out the window.
- K. Talk quietly; no loud outbursts.
- L. Students will always cross in front of the bus when loading or unloading, after the bus driver signal.
- M. Students must have a bus pass from the school office to ride a different bus or leave the bus at a different stop.

Remember: Safety First

