

Grant Parish School Board Transportation Department
Bus Riders' Handbook

Student Responsibilities

Before the Bus Arrives

1. Arrive at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the bus is due. If a student is not at their designated stop, the bus will not stop. Dress appropriately for the weather. You may have to wait in the rain or cold.
2. Wait for the bus in a safe place; stand ten (10) feet back from the roadway and wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before approaching.
3. Form a single line and enter the bus in an orderly manner (no pushing or shoving).
4. When entering or exiting the bus, always use the handrail.
5. Once you have entered the bus, find your assigned seat quickly.
6. Carry belongings in a backpack or book bag and if something falls under or around the bus, tell the driver. NEVER TRY TO PICK IT UP YOURSELF!

While on the Bus

1. All rules for the classroom apply to the bus. No loud talking or yelling is permitted. Remain quiet so as not to distract the driver.
2. Always cooperate with the bus driver and other school officials.
3. Remain seated and face forward at all times; keep feet out of the aisle and do not change seats. Bus seats are designed to protect you in an accident and can only do so if you are sitting properly. Do not stand to exit the bus while the bus is still in motion.
4. Do not be destructive. Throwing objects on or off the bus is strictly prohibited. Students and their parents may be held responsible for damage to the bus or property outside the bus. Vandalism, including writing on seats, will not be tolerated.
5. Harmful items, such as drugs, tobacco, matches, lighters, obscene materials, alcohol, knives, weapons, etc. are strictly prohibited.
6. Be courteous to your bus driver and fellow passengers. Do not use profane language or gestures.
7. Sports equipment and band instruments must be in a bag or case.
8. Help keep the bus clean.
9. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus at all times.
10. No food or beverages are permitted.

Student Responsibilities Continued

11. Only those items that can be safely held in your lap or stored under the seat will be permitted on the bus. Do not bring large objects such as science projects, poster boards, etc. on the bus.
12. Remain absolutely quiet when the bus is approaching and stopped at railroad crossings.
13. Boarding or exiting the bus at a stop other than your assigned stop will not be allowed without written permission from a parent/guardian, signed by the principal.
14. Keep the rear emergency exit door clear. Do not use the emergency exits except for emergencies.
15. Do not bring glass objects (except eye glasses prescribed by a doctor), balloons or floral arrangements on the bus.
16. Keep objects such as pens and pencils in a backpack or purse while on the bus.
17. Animals are not allowed on the bus.
18. Electronic devices such as cell phones, MP3 players, gaming devices, etc. are not allowed on the bus. Devices will be confiscated and turned over to the school administration.
19. Students are expected to follow school dress codes while riding the bus.

When Exiting the Bus

1. Exit the bus in an orderly manner (no pushing or shoving).
2. If you must cross the street, walk away from the bus and forward about ten (10) feet until you can see the driver's face. Cross only after the driver motions for you to cross, and check traffic before you cross the street.
3. If something falls under or near the bus, tell the driver. NEVER PICK IT UP YOURSELF!
4. Never cross behind the bus.
5. Cross over about ten (10) feet away from the side of the bus and stay away from the wheels. Do not attempt to grab the bus or run after it. Never crawl under the bus.
6. Go directly home after leaving the bus.

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Parents' Responsibilities

The task of transporting students safely and efficiently can only be successfully accomplished with the cooperation and help of parents who are encouraged to reinforce safety guidelines with their children and to support and appreciate disciplinary measures. All of these policies are designed to help insure a SAFE and pleasant ride for ALL students. Knowledge and support by parents concerning student responsibilities and disciplinary guidelines will help the students retain their privilege of riding a school bus. Listed below are responsibilities which parents should assume in order to reach the goal of a safe ride for everyone.

1. Make sure your children are at the bus stop five (5) minutes before scheduled bus arrival. Be sure they dress appropriately for the weather, since they may have to wait in the rain or cold.
2. Supervise you children to, from and at the bus stop for their safety and protection.
3. If you have to pick up your children from the school, please do so in a timely manner. Failure to do so could result in your children being turned over to our Grant Parish Sheriff's Department Resource Officer.
4. Equip your children with backpacks or book bags which free their hands for balance and holding onto the bus handrail.
5. Teach your children the rules for safe bus riding (see students' responsibilities).
6. Teach your children their address, phone number and bus number.
7. Items and objects that are not permitted on the bus must be taken to school in some other way (see items not allowed on buses).
8. Report illegal and/or unsafe school bus driving to the Transportation Department immediately.
9. Assume responsibility for the behavior of your children while they are riding the bus and at the bus stop. If bus riding privileges are revoked, parents must provide transportation to and from school, until privileges are reinstated.
10. All motorists should know and obey the Louisiana school bus stop law La RS 32:80.
§80. Overtaking and passing school buses
A.(1) The driver of a vehicle upon a highway meeting or overtaking from any direction any school bus that has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children shall stop the vehicle not less than thirty feet from the school bus before reaching such school bus when there are in operation on said school bus visual signals as required by R.S. 32:318, and said driver shall not proceed until such bus resumes motion or the visual signals are no longer activated.

Parents' Responsibilities Continued

(2) The driver of any school bus is authorized to notify the appropriate law enforcement authority of any violation of this Subsection within twenty-four hours of the violation. This notification shall be in writing on a form provided to the bus driver by the school board, shall be signed by the school bus driver, under penalty of criminal prosecution, in the presence of two witnesses, and it shall include the license plate number and color of the vehicle. The notice may be sent to the appropriate law enforcement agency by mail, fax, or electronically. If mailed, the notice shall be deemed timely if postmarked the day after the violation.

(3) The appropriate authority may issue a citation to the owner or, in the case of a leased vehicle, the lessee of the vehicle involved, on the basis of this information. The owner or lessee shall not be cited if the vehicle is stolen, or if another driver is cited for the violation.

(4) Any person convicted of violating this Subsection shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than six months, or both, in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 32:398.2, and shall have his driver's license suspended in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 32:414(A)(2).

10. At no time is anyone allowed to step onto a school bus who is not a Grant Parish student or a Grant Parish School employee.

Items Not Allowed On Buses

Students are not permitted to bring large items on the bus that cannot be held in their lap or stored under a seat. This includes large band instruments, boxes, or projects. Students are not allowed to store items in the front of the bus under the dash or next to the driver. Also, the transportation of animals, weapons, drugs, and objects that pose a threat to the passengers is strictly prohibited.

Lost and Found

Items accidentally left on the school bus will generally be kept on the bus by the driver for one or two days. If unclaimed, items will be turned into the respective school.

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Safety Tips

Be aware of the Danger Zone – The Danger zone is the ten (10) feet area around the bus. The bus driver can't see you when you are in the Danger Zone. If the bus starts moving while you are in the Danger Zone, you could be injured.

Safety Tips at the Bus Stop

- Wait away from the road.
- If it is dark outside, make sure you are visible. Wear light colored clothing.
- Don't fool around while waiting on the bus.
- Wait until the bus comes to a full stop.
- Walk to the bus single file.
- Use the handrail to get on and off the bus.
- Move away from the door quickly once you are off the bus.
- If you must cross the road, walk at least ten (10) steps ahead of the bus along the edge of the road.
- Wait until the driver signals you across the road – check traffic first.

Weather / School Closings

There is always the possibility that inclement weather may hinder transportation services. Parents should remind students on days when there is snow, ice or flooding and school is in session, that buses will often be running late.

To determine if school has been dismissed, parents and students may listen to the radio or watch the television. Listed are the stations that receive school cancellation information before 6:00 a.m.

Television: KALB, KLAX
Radio: KLAA FM 103.5, KRRV FM 100.3, KVDP FM 89.1

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency on the school bus, students must always cooperate with the bus driver. Students should remember to remain calm and be quiet so they can hear the driver's instructions. This is especially critical if it becomes necessary to evacuate the bus due to an immediate hazardous condition.

Riding a Different Bus

Students who wish to ride a bus other than their assigned bus (i.e. going home with a friend, going to a babysitter, etc.) should provide the school with a note from their parent or guardian. If the request cannot be granted due to overcrowding issues, the parent or guardian will be contacted.

Late Buses

Despite everyone's best efforts to keep the buses on time, it is inevitable that buses will sometimes be late. Unforeseen situations such as mechanical breakdowns or traffic congestion can prohibit the bus from being on time. When these situations occur, the Transportation Department makes every effort to get the bus back on schedule; however, it is not always possible.

Parents are encouraged to wait with their children at the bus stop. Parents, who cannot stay at the bus stop with their children, should have contingency plans with neighbors and with their children on what to do if the bus is late or if the child should miss the bus.

Field Trips / Activity Trips

Transportation is also provided, when feasible, to transport students attending various academic or competitive events. Students riding the bus on field trips/activity trips are expected to follow the same rules that apply to students riding buses to and from school on a daily basis. Misbehavior will not be tolerated and will result in loss of future riding privileges.

Parents of students going on field trips/activity trips must sign a separate permission form, provided by the school, before students will be allowed to ride the bus on a field trip/activity trip.

Field trip/activity trip transportation is provided only for students and employees of the Grant Parish School Board.

Reporting Problems

Parents and students should report problems, with other students on the bus, to the bus driver. Please do not distract the driver while students are loading or unloading and keep conversation with the driver to a minimum. Other children are waiting for the bus at the next stop and extended conversation with the driver may cause other traffic to be delayed and/or cause an accident. If parents need to have a discussion with the driver please call the driver or schedule a meeting at the school. Parents/guardians or any person who is not a Grant Parish School Board employee or a Grant Parish student are not allowed by law to step onto a bus. Please be aware there are laws protecting school board property and school board employees.

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Safe Conduct Guidelines

A student's behavior on the bus directly impacts the safety of all other students on the bus. To safely transport students, the bus driver must be able to concentrate on driving the bus without distractions from students who are misbehaving; therefore, unacceptable behavior by students will not be tolerated and will ultimately result in loss of bus riding privileges.

In addition, the quality of the ride and atmosphere inside the bus affects the students' ability to learn and his/her attitude for the whole day. Therefore, it is important that disruptive students not be allowed to negatively impact a child's school day. Students who disrupt the bus will not be allowed to ride the bus.

Parents should also be aware that the inside of a bus is a confined space where children are sitting very close together, usually with several age groups mixed together. This creates an atmosphere where even minor behaviors can be annoying to other students and cause conflicts. Also, since so many children are together at the same time, peer pressure may cause a child to act out, when under other circumstances, the child may not. Because of these factors which are unique to the bus, a child may not exhibit the same behavior on the bus as he/she does in the classroom, at home, or in a less stressful environment. Parents are requested to instruct their children appropriate bus behavior and tolerance. Please help reinforce the authority of the bus driver as you would a teacher's authority in the classroom.

Drivers are trained to recognize and deal appropriately with misbehavior. They don't arbitrarily choose a student to "pick on". If a child is continually getting in trouble on the bus, it is because of some behavior that is inappropriate. Many times, the best way to keep a child out of trouble is to separate him/her from other children who are not making good decisions or are causing the child to act out. For these reasons, the bus driver's second step, after talking, is to assign a different seat. Parents or the child can request an assigned seat to keep the student out of trouble.

Parents should also recognize that the driver's attention is divided between the traffic outside the bus and the children inside the bus. A driver can only monitor students through a mirror while maneuvering a large vehicle through traffic. Misbehavior, which distracts the driver's attention, could result in a catastrophe, while the same behavior in the classroom may result in only a slight disruption.

Bus Stops

Bus stops will be assigned only at a student's residence. A place of business cannot be used as a bus stop unless the residence is located at the same address. Arrangements may be made to accommodate daycare facilities but only if feasible. If the number of children riding the bus to and from the daycare facility overflows a bus, school bus transportation will not be available.

A student's behavior at a bus stop, prior to the arrival of the bus, is the responsibility of the parent. Destruction of property and/or vandalism at a bus stop by a student is a civil matter and will be handled by the police.

Bus stop mileage requirements:

3/10 of a mile total (in and out) for PreK – 8th grade

4/10 of a mile total (in and out) for 9th – 12th grade

The road must be an all-weather road with a bus turnaround. If the road and/or the turnaround is on private property, a notarized permission form must be completed by the property owner. The Transportation Department will inspect the road and/or turnaround before final approval will be given.

The Grant Parish School Board does not create or maintain roads, driveways or turnarounds.

In an effort to keep our younger students safe, it is the practice of the Grant Parish School Board not to release students, pre-kindergarten through third grade, off of the bus unless a parent/guardian or other designated adult is in view of the driver.

If there is not a parent/guardian or designated adult at the bus stop, the student will be returned to the school or placed into the custody of our Grant Parish Sheriff's Department Resource Officer after the bus route.

Transportation will be suspended:

Third occurrence for five (5) days

Fourth occurrence for ten (10) days

Fifth occurrence for the remainder of the school year

Working together we can keep our children safe.

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My signature below indicates that I have read the Bus Riders' Handbook and have instructed my child(ren) on the bus rules.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date