

## STUDENT CONDUCT ON THE SCHOOL BUS

The student school day begins as students board the bus. With the safety of all students in mind, it is essential that students and parents understand and observe the following concepts and safety rules:

1. **Riding the bus is a privilege.** State law requires all passengers to follow the instructions of the bus driver. His or her responsibility is to ensure the safety of all students on the bus. The standards of behavior on the bus are the **same** as in the classroom. Repeated failures to comply with the rules or driver instructions will result in suspension or revocation of bus privileges.
2. **At the Bus Stop:**
  - a. South Carolina law, Section 59-67-415, states parents or guardians are responsible for the safety, conduct, and the timely arrival of their children to, from, and at the designated school bus stop. This applies to the time before the school bus arrives to pick up students for delivery to school and after the school bus departs the designated school bus stop after student drop off.
  - b. Students must be on time at the designated school bus stop when the bus arrives.
  - c. Students may not use buses or bus stops other than those assigned to them without written permission by parents/guardians to the school **and** with approval of the Principal and Transportation Department.
  - d. When approaching the bus stop, if students have to walk along the highway, they should always walk on the shoulder of the left side of the highway, facing traffic.
  - e. When students need to cross the highway to board the bus, they must wait on the sidewalk or side of the road until the bus driver directs them to cross. They must cross in front of the stopped bus and walk, not run. Do not walk behind a school bus; the driver can't see you.
  - f. Students should not run toward the bus when the bus is moving, but should wait until it comes to a complete stop and then walk to the bus entry door.
  - g. Parents/guardians: do not attempt to board the bus. State law prohibits this in Section 59-67-245, Interference with the Operation of a School Bus.
3. **On the Bus:**
  - a. Go to the assigned seat, without pushing or crowding, and remain properly seated while the bus is in motion.
  - b. Never extend arms, legs, or head out of the bus doors or windows.
  - c. Students should not talk to the driver while the bus is in motion, except in an emergency.
  - d. No eating on the bus. No drinking on the bus except water when authorized by the driver.
  - e. No use of mobile phones, iPods, or similar electronic devices on the school bus.
  - f. Never tamper with the emergency door or any other bus equipment.
  - g. Do not damage, mark on, or deface the bus. Seat coverings must not be damaged in any manner. Students should report any bus or seat damage to the bus driver as soon as possible. If a student is found to have damaged a school bus, the student will be charged the assessed repair rate set by the State Department of Education. The student responsible for the damage will be suspended from riding the bus until restitution is made in full.
  - h. Only the driver or other authorized person should remove first aid equipment, which is for emergency treatment only.
  - i. Do not tamper with the fire extinguisher. Only the driver should use it for an emergency.
  - j. Do not fight or scuffle on the bus or create any disturbance. The standards of conduct required on the bus are the same as the standards of conduct in the classroom.
  - k. Do not throw objects from the bus windows.
  - l. Do not place books, lunch boxes or other objects in the aisle or on the rear deck of the bus.
  - m. Leave all pencils, school supplies, and personal items inside your backpack or book bag.
  - n. Band instruments must fit on the student's lap. See expanded explanation on the Transportation webpage.

- o. Sports equipment must remain in appropriate sports equipment bags or backpacks and may not be removed from those bags while on the bus.
- p. Hoods are not permitted to be worn on the school bus unless the bus driver allows it in severely cold situations.

#### 4. **Leaving the Bus:**

- a. Students must remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. Never attempt to leave the seat before the bus comes to a full stop and the driver indicates it is safe to depart.
- b. Passengers should leave in an orderly manner.
- c. Do not loiter or play around a stopped or parked bus.
- d. Do not enter restricted areas or school grounds set aside for bus parking or loading.
- e. Students are permitted to unload only at their regular, designated stops. Any changes must be made by the parent's or designee's written request **and** approved by the principal.
- f. After departing the bus, students (if they must cross the highway) must wait beyond the front crossing gate until the bus driver or school bus patrol directs them to cross.
- g. In accordance with South Carolina law, students misbehaving on the school bus will be referred to the school's administrator for appropriate disciplinary action.

5. **Procedures to deal with misconduct on the buses.** Drivers will work directly with students to correct misconduct. When attempted correction does not remedy the situation the driver is required by South Carolina law to report non-compliance with his/her lawful instructions and/or misconduct on the bus to the school principal. Buses are equipped with video surveillance equipment to assist principals in addressing student conduct issues. Bus riders will be denied bus privileges if their behavior is unacceptable or infringes on the rights of other bus riders. It will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide transportation to school during the suspension period. **For the safety of all students, school administrators will follow these guidelines for addressing referrals for of misconduct on the bus:**

- a. First Referral: Warning and parent notification of consequences for future incidents
- b. Second Referral: One (1) to five (5) days' suspension from bus
- c. Third Referral: Five (5) to ten (10) days' suspension from bus
- d. Fourth Referral: Ten (10) to thirty (30) days' suspension from bus
- e. Fifth Referral: Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Please note, these guidelines apply to cumulative referrals for bus misconduct. That is, consequences will progress in severity as a student accumulates referrals for rules infractions from one incident to the next. The sequence will not start over simply because a rules infraction is different than infractions in previous referrals.

Students and parents should not attempt to discuss school bus rule violations or disciplinary measures with the school bus driver at a bus stop. Students who attempt to board the bus while suspended or adults who attempt to board or interfere with the operation of the bus, may be prosecuted under applicable South Carolina law.