

Bus Rider's Safety Handbook for Parents and Students

Tom Bean ISD's primary goal is to transport students to and from school safely and efficiently by providing the best possible transportation services. To accomplish this goal, there are responsibilities and rules for each member involved in the transportation process—the staff, students, and parents. We ask parents to become familiar with the rules and procedures and to discuss them with their children. Your support as a parent will help make TBISD transportation the safest possible.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Read and become familiar with the rules and procedures stated in this handbook.
- Discuss the material with your child and encourage them to obey the rules and procedures.
- Understand that riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right. Ignoring the rules and procedures will result in disciplinary action and/or suspension of bus-riding privileges.
- Be courteous when talking with the driver or other school personnel.
- Support the driver and school by supporting disciplinary action.
- Contact the Transportation Director when you have questions or concerns regarding transportation.

The Director can be reached at 903-546-6333 ex 239.

Student Responsibilities:

- Become familiar with and faithfully follow the rules and procedures stated in this handbook.
- These rules and procedures are for your safety and well-being.
- Understand that riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right. Ignoring the rules and procedures will result in disciplinary action and/or suspension of bus-riding privileges.
- Obey the instructions of the bus driver at all times. Be respectful and you will be respected in turn.
- Be courteous to the driver and other bus riders.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Place safety as the number one priority.
- Conduct themselves as professionals, dedicated to caring for the people served.
- Be respectful, courteous, and polite.
- Be punctual and organized.
- Take pride in the work, including maintaining clean work areas and buses.
- Be a leader through individual actions and be accountable for those actions.

- Communicate with others and work as a team.
- Develop respect from the community and school for quality job performance.
- Read and become familiar with all transportation policies and procedures.
- Run the most efficient and effective transportation as possible.

Route Designations

Routes are numbered by the Transportation Director according to the route, NOT the bus number. Though all attempts are made to keep the same bus on a route, it will be necessary at times to have different numbered buses on a route.

Therefore, students should not depend on knowing the bus number of the bus. Instead, he/she should become familiar with the driver and with the animal sign posted in the window next to the door of the bus. This animal sign will allow the student to be assured that he/she is getting on the right bus.

Routes are also subject to change during the school year. Bus drivers will notify students of any changes in routes. Routes are designed with student safety and conservation of district resources in mind. Stops will be as far apart as possible in order to decrease the number of stops each bus will make on its route thus minimizing the overall riding time for students. Students may be asked to walk up to ½ mile. Stops are subject to change during the school year. Bus drivers will notify students of any changes in routes. If a parent has a concern regarding the safety of a stop, please contact the Transportation Director at 903-546-6333 ex 239.

Pick-up time Criteria

Bus drivers will attempt to arrive at every bus stop on time. Due to variances between individual clocks, students should arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses will load students and depart the stop. Buses do not wait for late students under most circumstances.

Daily Service Criteria

Regular transportation is scheduled to provide service to student riders. Bus stops that do not have riders for 3 days may be suspended temporarily for lack of ridership in order to conserve district resources. Infrequent riders should contact the Transportation Department stating their wish to ride when service is needed if their bus stop has historically low ridership in order to verify stop time and location.

Substitute Bus Drivers

There are times that substitute bus drivers will take the place of the regular driver. When a substitute driver is employed, he/she is expected to fulfill all the obligations and requirements of the regular driver. Substitute drivers must meet all the requirements of regular route drivers. Students are expected to be on their best behavior for substitute drivers. Students may offer their assistance to substitute drivers in order to help the driver make accurate turns and stops.

Substitute bus drivers will submit Discipline Notices just as regular drivers do for improper behavior.

Student Transportation Registration Form

In the spring of each school year, a Student Transportation Registration form will be sent home with each bus rider. This form must be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to school before the end of the school year. These forms will be used to design routes for the upcoming school year and will serve as a contact information form in case of any emergency. A Registration form will be required of any student wishing to ride the bus.

Student Bus Passes

The Student Bus Pass is required for a change in destination on the same bus route, for those times when a student must ride a different route, or for non-riding students to temporarily ride a bus. Parents must submit a note or call the campus secretary requesting that a student be allowed to change destination, ride a different route, or ride a bus temporarily. The campus secretary will complete the Bus Pass and keep a copy on file. The original pass will be given to the student to show the driver when the student boards the bus. If a student does not have a pass, the student will NOT be allowed to board the bus. Passes may be temporary or permanent and may be revoked at any time for poor conduct while on the bus or at a bus stop.

Inclement Weather Conditions

When inclement weather and poor road conditions are present or expected, the driver will plan to run the route unless notified by the Transportation Director. However, the driver may begin the route a few minutes earlier than usual. Parents and students may find that the bus is a little earlier or later than normal. Please work with the driver as he/she wishes to make the trip to school as safe as possible. The information will first be posted and sent to those signed up through www.flashalert.net. A notification will be sent to all subscribers. The notification will also air the following:

Ch. 10 KTEN TV

Ch. 12 KXII TV

KFYN 1420 / KFYZ 98.3

KIKT 93.5 / KGVV 1400

KLAK 97.5 (McKinney)

Student Conduct

Rules defining student conduct are designed to protect the passengers and shall be observed at all times. Thus, all rules apply not only to regular routes but also field and extracurricular trips.

The General Bus Rules are:

- Be respectful and obey the instructions of the bus driver at all times.
- Board and leave the bus at designated stops only.
- Ride only the bus to which you are assigned unless you have a Bus Pass.
- Stay seated in your assigned seat at all times and keep the aisle clear of legs, feet, and objects.
- Keep hands, feet, head and objects to yourself and inside the bus.
- Do not use foul language.
- Follow school rules so that you do not disrupt the bus driver.
- No eating or drinking allowed on the bus at any time except for a water bottle.

However, more specific expectations for following those rules shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Address the bus driver by his/her proper name, for example, Mr. Brown.
- Scuffling, shoving, or fighting is prohibited on the bus.
- Littering or throwing items inside or from the bus is prohibited.
- Students may not use tobacco products on the bus or while at a bus stop.
- Students shall not deface or vandalize the bus or related equipment. Students that violate this rule will be required to pay for damages.
- Students are not to talk loudly, yell, or use profanity or other inappropriate language or gestures on the bus or bus stop.
- Students are not to engage in any other conduct that disrupts the safe operation of the bus.
- When necessary, students will sit three to a seat.
- Students may use the emergency door only during an emergency or when loading/unloading large equipment.

Procedures for Waiting on the Bus

- Be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the pick-up time. The driver will not wait or honk the horn. Wait at least 10 minutes after regular pick-up time before reporting a late bus.
- Stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway while waiting for the school bus and maintain proper behavior (no pushing, fighting, inappropriate language, etc.).
- When the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
- Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
- If you miss the bus, go home immediately.
- Parents should instruct their child on what to do if they miss the bus.

- Parents are responsible for transporting a child to school if the student misses the bus.

Loading the Bus

- Do not push or shove.
- Use the handrail and steps.
- Go to your assigned seat.

NOTE: One of the most serious problems associated with loading and unloading students is the school bus being passed by other motorists. Often a motorist will pass while the overhead red flashers are operating. The driver's responsibility for the safety of the students is his/her main concern at such a time. However, if it is possible, drivers are instructed to take down the license number of the vehicle and report this to the Transportation Director. The license number will be reported to legal authorities. Please do not endanger our district's students by passing a school bus loading or unloading. No amount of time you may save is worth a student's life.

Getting Off the Bus

- Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped.
- Use the handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus.
- Wait for your turn to leave the bus.
- Stay clear of the bus when the engine is started. Do not chase or hang onto the bus.
- Ask for help if needed.
- Go immediately to your school or home.

Crossing a Street or Highway

- Walk in front of the bus and wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
- Students crossing to the left side of the road should make eye contact with the driver and wait for his/her signal before crossing the street.
- Check in both directions and walk directly across the road as a group.
- Never turn back or re-cross the street for any reason.
- Never cross the road behind the bus.
- CAUTION: Be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or unloading.

Prohibited Items

- All kinds of tobacco
- Live animals or insects
- Glass containers
- Alcoholic beverages
- Weapons, explosive devices, fireworks, harmful drugs or chemicals

- Open flames of any kind (matches, lighters, etc.)
- Any object that cannot be carried by the student.
- Open food and/or drinks (except water).
- Helium filled/floating balloons
- Items not allowed at school

Discipline Notices

When a discipline issue arises that cannot be handled on the bus, the bus driver may complete an Incident Report. This report will be given to the campus principal who will complete the Disciplinary Action section. The principal will distribute the copies: one to the parent, one to the bus driver, one to the transportation director, and one to remain in the principal's files.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and according to the following:

- 1st offense: The principal will warn the student and send a warning Discipline Notice to the student's parent.
- 2nd offense: The student may be removed from the bus for up to five days. The principal will notify the student's parent by letter.
- 3rd offense: The student may be removed from the bus for up to fifteen days. The principal will notify the student's parent by letter.
- 4th offense: The student will be removed from the bus for the remainder of the semester or the remainder of the school year if there are fewer than 30 days left in the semester.
- Major offense: The principal has the authority to skip steps for serious violations. Any offense considered major by the principal will result in the immediate loss of bus privileges for up to the remainder of the semester or school year.

The principal may repeat steps as necessary.

Please note that the district may file a complaint with the justice or municipal court for any disruptive or disorderly bus rider.

NOTE: You must provide transportation to and from school for your child if he/she is suspended from riding the bus. It is a violation of compulsory attendance laws of the State of Texas for your child to fail to attend school.