

BUS TRANSPORTATION

WCSD Bus Transportation Requirements for 2020-21

Student safety is the number one priority of WCSD and students and parents are reminded that riding a school bus is an extension of the school day, and that students are expected to follow the same rules of respect and following directions as they are in the school building. Riding a school bus is a privilege that the school district does not want to see any student lose; however, unruly, misbehaving students will be removed from the busses to protect the safety of all students. Students that ride the school bus must go by these rules in order to ride the bus. We want our drivers to be able to focus on the road ahead as well as student loading and unloading zones rather than being distracted due to student behavior.

According to the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration (NHSTA), a school bus is the safest vehicle on the road. NHSTA also states students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when taking a school bus instead of traveling by car. It is the mission of WCSD Transportation Department to ensure that our busses are the safest on the road!

We want to inform the parents of the following rules that were approved by the Board of Education:

- At **no time** will students act toward or address comments to a bus driver or monitor in a disrespectful manner or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
- Students shall get on or off the bus only at their assigned stop/route, unless otherwise directed with a note from the school office. Students riding a route other than what has been assigned will be returned to the school for the parent/guardian to pick them up.
- Students shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another person a place to sit.
- Students will be expected to **remain seated** for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until the bus door opens. No students will stand in the driver compartment.
- Students shall **not** throw any articles within the bus or out the bus window, and shall not extend any part of their body, clothing, or other articles out of the bus window.
- Students shall not take or handle any emergency equipment inside the bus, and shall never board or leave the bus through the emergency door except in an emergency.
- Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door except in cases of extreme emergency.

- Students shall not yell, scream, whistle, or operate an electronic device to a point where it interferes with the safe operation of the school bus.
- Students shall not write upon, disfigure, or destroy any part of the school bus. The parent or guardian may be held responsible for any damages to the school bus.
- **The use of obscene, vulgar, or profane language are forbidden.**
- Students shall not carry tobacco, including E-cigs/Juuls, etc., weapons, explosives (such as fireworks), knives, pointed articles, animals (pets), intoxicating beverages, drug paraphernalia or drugs on the bus.
- Large items will not be transported on the school bus. The driver has the discretion to allow certain larger than normal items which could be placed at the front of the bus. Items should be no larger than what could rest in student's lap. Balloons are prohibited. Arrangements can be made with the parent or guardian and school staff for the pickup of large items.
- Students shall not eat, drink, or litter on the bus.
- Students shall arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled time. Students shall remain off road at all times. Students shall stand twelve feet back from the roadway in an orderly group and not approach the bus until the door has opened, red stop lights flashing and the stop sign are activated and until the bus has come to a complete stop. Always be careful watching the driver in case of emergency. If a student drops an item while crossing, signal the driver with a waving motion of your hands. Wait for the driver to signal back before you pick the item up.
- Students loading the bus at the school bus loop should use care, be prompt, and ready to board without horse play. **Buses will not return to transport students that are horse playing etc. to transport the student.** School Administration will notify the parent or guardian to come transport the student. Depending on the circumstances, the Transportation Director or his designee may authorize the bus driver to return to the school for a student that has missed the bus.
- All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 12 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross. Students shall never cross behind the bus.
- Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip shall keep their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the bus aisle.
- Students will abide by the individual school's rules and regulations concerning bus students.
- Serious offenses are defined but not limited to those listed above.

- Rough housing, scuffling, pushing, shoving, and fighting is strictly prohibited. Law enforcement, school administration, and or the transportation director may authorize the removal of students from the bus.
- **Be silent** at railroad crossings. **Do Not** distract the driver.
- Be courteous to the driver and other students.
- All rules apply on field trips as they do on a regular school day.
- Emergency drills will be conducted each year. Student participation is required.
- The Director or Assistant Transportation Director are authorized to alter routes, reassign students and authorize the removal of a disruptive student.

STEPS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR IMPROPER CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

A bus conduct report is written and forwarded to the assigned Assistant Principal at the school attended by the rule violator. The Assistant Principal in charge of bus discipline will follow the district's code of conduct for transportation. The Director of Transportation will be notified of all discipline issues on a school bus by the Assistant Principal. The student's parent or guardian copy of the report will be issued to the student.

- Student violates rule.
- Driver completes discipline referral form and submits to Assistant Principal.
- Assistant Principal investigates and resolves the discipline issue and notifies both the Director of Transportation and the student's parent.

Bus riding privileges may be revoked by the Administration of the Worth County School District.

Note:

- Worth County Schools has the authority to skip steps for serious violations or to designate such other punishment as deemed appropriate.
- If your child needs to be picked up or dropped off at a different location, please send a written note with your child to your child's school. The bus driver will be made aware of the change by school administration.
- Any complaints in reference to concern with your children on the bus can be made to the Student Services Coordinator, Mrs. Sandi Giddens, 229-776-8600.

If there are any complaints or concerns in reference to the bus driver, a formal written complaint should be submitted to Rusty Parten, Director of Transportation. The **WCSD Transportation Complaint Form** can be found at www.worthschools.net under the Transportation tab, or forms can be picked up at each school or the bus shop.

Safe School Bus Riding Practices

The school bus driver has authority over, and responsibility for, students while on the bus. It is the student's responsibility to follow the rules and follow the direction of their school bus driver. Proper student behavior is important because any driver distraction is potentially hazardous to student safety, the safety of the driver and the safety of other road users.

Students should be aware that they are responsible for their actions and behavior and that school bus transportation can be denied if they do not conduct themselves properly. The following are some general rules of conduct for student safety **while on the school bus**.

Students should:

- Follow directions of the school bus driver the first time given.
- Go directly to an available or assigned seat when entering the bus.
- Remain seated.
- ****Sit the safe way, facing forward with your back against the back of the seat and your bottom against the bottom of the seat. *In the event that the bus driver has to brake hard or if there is a serious accident, it is essential that the student is sitting properly in order for the compartmentalization protection of the padded high backed bus seats to be effective (keeping the student within the safety of the padded space that surrounds them).***
- Tell your bus driver if someone is picking on you or making you feel uncomfortable.
- Keep aisles and exits clear.
- Exhibit classroom conduct at all times.
- Respect the rights and safety of others.
- Not destroy property.
- Remain quiet enough not to distract the driver.
- ****Remain absolutely quiet at railroad grade crossings. *This is a critical moment. The bus driver must be able to hear an approaching train.***
- Refrain from chewing gum, eating and drinking on the bus.
- Not throw objects.
- Refrain from extending head, arms or objects out of the bus windows.
- Not use or possess tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons.
- Not use obscene language or gestures.
- Not operate cell phones while on the bus. This includes getting on and off the bus.
- Not bring onto the bus any animals, glass objects or items too large to hold in your lap.
- Help keep the bus clean.
- Refrain from leaving or boarding the bus at locations other than the assigned stop. Follow local school system procedures to obtain signed permission for a change of stop location.

- Refrain from spraying fragrances such as perfume, cologne or body spray.
- Not use mirrors, lasers, flash cameras or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the bus driver's operation of the school bus.

Safe Student Bus Riding Instructions

Safety Rules at the Bus Stop

- Be at the designated bus stop five minutes before time for the bus to arrive.
- Wait a safe distance of 12' from the road, and be prepared to quickly board the bus.
- Refrain from pushing, horseplay, or any other unsafe activity while at the bus stop.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, wait for the red stop sign to come out, the red flashing lights to activate, and for the door to completely open before approaching the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops; then walk to the door and board the bus in an orderly manner.
- When having to cross the road, wait on your side of the road for the bus to arrive.
- Wait for the driver to give hand signal that it is ok to cross the road (Stop, look, listen).
- Be sure all traffic has stopped both ways before crossing the road.
- If you miss the bus, do not chase after the bus; go back home and tell your parents.

Safety Rules for Entering and Exiting the Bus at the Stop and at the School

- Keep electronic equipment packed away when preparing to board and exit the bus. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds or earphones when boarding or exiting.
- Walk in front of the bus to stay in the driver's view when crossing the road; never cross the road behind a school bus.
- Load the bus in single file without making contact with the one in front of you.
- No pushing, shoving, or horse play while loading the bus.
- Use the handrail when entering or exiting the bus.
- Board the bus quickly and safely and get seated as promptly as possible.
- Do not linger around bus after exiting the bus, clear the roadway as far as possible.
- While unloading at the school, unload from the front to back of the bus.

- When stepping off the bus onto the bus ramp, keep moving and go straight to the sidewalk.
- Never stop to get mail from the mailbox until bus has moved and traffic is flowing again.
- Never return to the bus without first getting the drivers attention first.
- Never retrieve a dropped item around the bus unless you get the drivers attention first.
- At any time, if the bus horn sounds, this is a signal for danger and you should react quickly to bus driver's directions to avoid injury.

Safety Rules While on the Bus

- Follow your bus driver's instructions at all times.
- Remain in your seat until the bus reaches your school/home and has come to a complete stop.
- Keep your voices at a normal speaking level while speaking to other students.
- Keep conversation to the driver to a minimum while the bus is moving.
- Never speak to the driver while loading and unloading at another student's stop.
- Be completely silent at all railroad crossings until the bus has completely cleared the tracks.
- Bus Evacuation Guidelines
- When any type of evacuation occurs, you must follow the instruction of the driver to safely unload and to relocate when possible, at least 100 feet in the direction away from the hazard and the roadway.
- Evacuation will be practiced on your bus with you twice each new school year.
- All buses are designed with several "emergency exits." These locations are, but not limited to, the entrance/exit door, rear door, emergency exit windows and roof hatches.
- Always use the front entrance/exit door during an evacuation when possible.
- All other exits should be used only when front entrance/exit door and the rear exit door are not available to use.
- When loading door is not available and the rear door is the chosen exit, selected older/mature students are instructed to assist you to the ground by sitting and sliding out feet first.
- Leave all personal belongings on the bus and exit from the front to the back of the selected exit location.
- Put away any electronic equipment before standing to exit the bus. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds or earphones until the student is safely 12 feet away from the roadway.

Additional Guidelines

- Students may not walk to another school for the purpose of riding a bus home from that school. All students are to ride the bus home from their assigned school.
- Conversation with the driver or behavior distracting the driver during loading and unloading of the bus should be avoided; during this critical time, complete concentration by the driver is required.
- Any type behavior distracting the driver during loading and unloading of buses should be avoided; during this critical time complete concentration by the driver is required.
- Parents should avoid conversation with the driver during loading and unloading; during this critical time, complete concentration by the driver is required.
- The use of school bus videos may be used to corroborate disciplinary action but is not required in order to assign dispositions.
- All bus dispositions are subject to administrative discretion. Dispositions may be increased or decreased as warranted by circumstances.

Automatic Bus Suspensions:

- Fighting
- Bullying
- Vulgar language towards bus driver or bus monitor.