

S.O.A.R.

(Safely, Orderly, And Respectfully)

To School



**Messalonskee
Transportation
Department
Behavior on the Bus**

Introduction

It is our goal to establish key strategies by teaching and developing safe and appropriate bus riding behaviors for and by our students. To protect the safety (physical and emotional) of each individual student on the bus, and to develop bus riding behaviors that will be relevant and meaningful when the student is out in the community, student behaviors will be expected to be **safe, orderly, and respectful**.

Behavior is a three part process that uses steps to help the driver and student to achieve that goal by developing and maintaining appropriate student behavior on the school bus. It consists of : (1) Prevention Steps (2) Intervention Steps (3) Consequences. The bus driver administers the first steps in the process. The Transportation Director administers the final step in the process.

- **Prevention:** Prevention steps are used by the bus driver to educate the students about safe and appropriate riding behaviors, clarify the bus drivers expectations for the students and assist students to understand how to successfully demonstrate safe riding habits every day.
- **Intervention:** Intervention steps are used by the bus driver to help the student stop unsafe and/or inappropriate behaviors or habits while assisting students to identify the appropriate habit or behavior. Intervention steps may also provide notification to the parent/guardian so that the parent can be involved in assisting the driver in changing unsafe and/or inappropriate riding habits.
- **Consequences:** If prevention and intervention steps are unsuccessful at improving the student's behavior or safe riding habits, a bus misconduct form will be submitted by the bus driver to the Transportation Director. The Transportation Director is then responsible for assigning appropriate, effective consequences for the student's inappropriate behavior in an effort to affect the necessary improvements.

PREVENTION

Expectations: Bus Drivers should clearly communicate expectations and reinforce as needed. Expectations should be based on bus rules.

Seat Assignments:

Bus drivers should learn the name of each student and their stop locations. Students will be assigned seats as part of the prevention step. Assigned seating will help with:

- Ownership of property surrounding the student's seat area.
- Knowing if a student is/was on board.
- Knowing who is on board for emergency purposes.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.
- Increased structure, routine, and consistency, especially during loading and unloading procedures.

School Bus Rules:

Students will annually receive instructions in safe bus riding procedures. Bus drivers will explain bus rules to students starting the first day of school and continue the teaching process throughout the year to enhance the safety of the children being transported. When the bus driver talks about the expected behaviors, they should offer practical examples to help them be more consistent. We encourage all parents to review these rule with their children, and help instill in their children the importance of safe, orderly, and respectful bus behavior.

Bus Rules:

- Students will follow directions of their bus driver. (This demonstrates **respect** to those with authority who are trying to keep us **safe** and/or maintain **order**.)
- Students should be at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the bus arriving, waiting in a **safe** place, clear of traffic and 10 feet from where the bus stops.
- Students will wait in an **orderly** manner and avoid horse playing (when waiting at property belonging to others, we should **respect** that property and take care to leave it undamaged).
- Students will cross the roadway in front of the bus after the bus has come to a complete stop; they have looked at the driver for a standardized signal (nod of the head in the affirmative) and they have looked in both directions for traffic; left, right, left. (This is a **safe** walking habit that protects students while traveling to their bus stop.)
- Students will notify the bus driver when they have dropped something, and wait for the driver's assistance before picking up the object. (Never, ever lose sight of the driver or do anything that would make him/her lose sight of you. This is a procedure that can never be broken if we are to keep you **safe**.)
- Students will go directly to assigned seat when entering the bus. This is **orderly** conduct that helps to minimize inconvenience to the public. Keep the aisles clear. An **orderly** bus is much **safer** for the students walking down the aisle and in the case of a sudden stop or emergency evacuation.
- Students will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat (**safely** seated with the "compartment") and keep hands to themselves (**respectful** to others and their "personal space.")

Bus Rules Continued:

- Students will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and/or any other controlled substances on the bus. (This will help us maintain a neat and **orderly** environment and keep all students **safe**.) Refer to the Transportation Departments “Eating on the Bus” procedure for additional information.
- Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items, hazardous materials, and/or weapons onto the bus. It is essential that we maintain a **safe** environment for all riders, even in case of an accident or emergency.
- Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, and/or obscene gestures. All students shall **respect** the rights and **safety** of others.
- Students will not extend head, arm, or objects out of the bus windows. (This is important to **safety** in every circumstance.)
- Students will be totally silent at railroad crossings. The driver is required by law to “stop, look, and listen” after establishing silence on the bus. This is a non-negotiable **safety** issue and a major offense when broken.
- Students will stay seated until time to get off the bus. The open door is the signal to get up from the bus seat if you are at your stop and a signal to use “whisper voices” until the unloading or loading process is complete. This is an **orderly** way to unload and increases **safety** by minimizing distractions.
- Students will strive to keep their area clean and in good safe condition. This helps to maintain an **orderly, safe** bus, and **respectful** to the next group of riders who will use it.

INTERVENTION

Bus drivers may use the interventions listed below during the intervention step of the process. A minor offense is considered inappropriate or unsafe student behavior that may be improved with minor assistance from the driver.

Documentation:

It is recommended that bus drivers establish a daily log where they may record daily written documentation of all occurrences.

Verbal Reminder:

Bus drivers will remind the student of the bus rules) not being followed.

Seat Reassignment:

A student's assigned seat may be changed by the bus driver when such change may help the student to demonstrate appropriate riding behavior and /or allow the driver to more effectively monitor that student's behavior.

Speak individually with student & parent/guardian:

Bus drivers shall speak individually with the student to determine what steps could be taken to help the student demonstrate appropriate and safe riding behaviors. Bus driver shall also call the parent/guardian to notify them of the students' inappropriate behavior, with a request to help achieve the appropriate behavior. (In cases where the bus driver does not choose to call, the next step should take place immediately.)

Interventions Continued:

Parent/Guardian notified in writing:

Bus drivers will complete a Bus Discipline Form which will include written documentation of the students' inappropriate behavior, with steps taken by the driver documented on the form. The form will be taken home by the student to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the bus driver the next school day. A phone call to the parent/guardian should be made if the form is not returned by the second day, and failure to return the form by the second day may result in suspension from the bus.

Any and all of the above steps may be bypassed when a student's actions are illegal or judged by the driver/director to be so unsafe or disrespectful that immediate corrective action is required.

Violations that should be considered major offenses include, but are not limited to the following:

- Drugs (includes alcohol, cigarettes, lighters)
- Throwing objects off the bus
- Fighting (trying intentionally to hurt someone)
- Weapons, dangerous instruments, and explosive/implosive devices
- Threats/bullying (verbal and physical threats)
- Sexual harassment

Such violations should be reported immediately to the Transportation Director on a Bus Misconduct Form.

CONSEQUENCES

When student misbehavior escalates beyond a driver's control or is not improved after using the appropriate intervention steps, the bus driver will submit a Bus Misconduct Form to the Transportation Director.

Bus Misconduct Form is sent to the Transportation Director:

Reasons:

- Behavior escalates beyond a driver's control and/or is not improved after using appropriate steps.
- Major offense.

The Transportation Director will assign appropriate consequences based on:

1. The severity of the misbehavior.
2. The number and frequency of the student's bus referrals.

The Transportation Director may tailor consequences to account for individual circumstances in each situation. The goal of assigning consequences is to bring about a desired student behavior on the school bus. The Transportation Department endorses the team concept and supports any consequences that achieve that goal.

Contact Telephone Numbers:

Transportation Office

Transportation Director	Lennie Goff	465-2102
Trip Coordinator	Rick Damren	465-2102
Safety Coordinator	Ed Wentworth	465-2102
Secretary/ Receptionist	Donna Boudreau	465-2102
Superintendents Office		465-7384