

# Bus Rules & Consequences

Somerville ISD Transportation Procedures were established for the safety of all students riding on district buses.

At the beginning of the school year, the Route Supervisor will designate the pick-up locations for students.

**The Bus Drivers have complete authority over all students and the power to enforce all rules and regulations. Bus Drivers have the same authority in the bus as teachers have in the classroom. Their directives are to be followed at all times to transport students safely, orderly, and reliably.**

**NOTE: By riding the bus, it is implied that all students and parents understand these rules and will abide by them. Stating that they did not know the rules does not excuse a student from misbehavior or infractions of the rules. Any violations of these rules by students during the last 2 (two) weeks of school may be carried over and charged to students the next school year.**

## General Safety Rules

1. Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time should a student be disrespectful or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
2. Board and leave the bus at designated stops only.
3. All students must ride their assigned bus. Student transportation on a bus other than the bus regularly assigned will be granted in **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS ONLY** (not to exceed one trip). Permission to ride a different bus will be granted only if a signed letter from a parent is presented along with a signature of approval from the campus principal. Most emergency situations would involve medical problems, accidents or the unforeseen necessity for the parent/guardian to be out of town.
4. **DO NOT ASK TO RIDE HOME ON ANOTHER BUS WITH A FRIEND.**
5. It is the **responsibility** of the parent/guardian to provide transportation to school if a child misses the bus.
6. The driver has the authority to confiscate any prohibited items or any other items deemed distracting or dangerous.

7. The driver will not allow any unauthorized person to board the bus.

## Procedures for Waiting for the Bus

1. Students should be at their designated bus stop ten (10) minutes early and visible before scheduled pickup time. The driver will not wait or honk, nor will he/she stop for late students or students running for the bus. Allow the bus driver ten (10) minutes before and/or ten (10) minutes after the scheduled time to get to the stop.

**Note:** The “ten minute” expectation also gives us a cushion in case we encounter unusual or unexpected conditions (accidents, broken traffic signals, traffic jams, trains, inclement weather, etc) that might delay our route. We rarely arrive at school after the starting bell and routinely meet our goal to deliver the students to campus “on time and ready to learn.”

2. Students should be no closer than 10 feet from the bus, which is called the "Danger Zone." Be in plain sight of the approaching bus driver and other traffic. Be watchful and don't play around.
3. Before the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
4. Stand still and clear of the bus. Move toward the bus ONLY after the bus driver opens the door and/or driver signals you to load.
5. Parents/guardians should instruct their children on what to do if they miss the bus.

## Loading the Bus

1. Do not push or shove; always use the handrail.
2. Stay out of the bus "Danger Zone." Wait until the door opens or the bus driver gives a signal before approaching the bus.

3. Go directly to your assigned seat. The bus will not move until all students are seated. Students must remain seated at all times. Delays affect traffic and schedules
4. **SEATING ARRANGEMENT WILL BE ASSIGNED.** The bus driver may change seating arrangements anytime he/she deems necessary.
5. Stay clear of the bus when the engine is started. Do not chase or hang onto the bus at any time. Stay out of the bus "Danger Zone". At the Campus while loading in the afternoon, students will not be allowed to board the bus after the doors are closed without administrative approval.

**Note:** Only authorized personnel and verified enrolled students are permitted to board a bus. If a parent/unauthorized person boards a bus, the Bus Driver shall issue a directive for the parent/unauthorized person to exit. The Bus Driver shall report the parent/unauthorized person to the Transportation Department. It is unlawful to impede the progress of a school bus. The fine for this penalty is \$500.

## Conduct on the Bus

1. Classroom dress code and conduct rules shall be followed. Shoes must be worn while riding the bus.
2. NO food, gum and/or drink of any kind are allowed on the bus. All food, gum and/or drink must be disposed of before boarding the bus.
3. Normal conversation is permitted; avoid loud noises that may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition. Do not talk to the driver while the bus is in motion.
4. **SEATBELTS ARE TO BE WORN AT ALL TIMES.** It should be fastened appropriately across their shoulder and lap. This activity is required by Texas State Law.
5. Keep all body parts inside the bus at all times.
6. **Scuffling, fighting, sexual misconduct and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language and gestures are Zero tolerance will be applied.**
7. Do not spit or throw objects inside or outside of the bus.
8. Do not litter, mark, cut or scratch any part of the bus. The student is responsible for vandalism to the bus and may be charged to repair if need be.

9. The emergency door and exit controls should be used by students only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.
10. Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door or other controls except in case of emergency.
11. Students shall remain seated at all times and face forward for the duration of the trip. Shall keep their feet in front of them and out of the bus The aisle should be clear at all times.
12. Students are to be silent at railroad crossings. The bus driver will give a signal to direct students to be quiet. This is required by Texas State Law.
13. Do not spray any substance (ex. hairspray, cologne, perfume, deodorant, etc.) while on the bus.
14. If possible, students should carry a school bag or sack, which will allow them to organize and secure their belongings.
15. Follow ALL rules outlined in the District's Transportation Rules and Regulations and Student Code of Conduct, as well as any rules established by the driver.

## **USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students shall not use electronic devices such as cellular phones, tablets, laptop computers, or video games on the bus without the Bus Driver's permission. Headphones or earbuds **must** be used provided the user is listening through personal headphones and the volume is low enough that others cannot hear the music. The Bus Driver may provide students the use of their cell phone in emergency situations. Taking pictures or video recording is strictly prohibited. **The following rules will apply to student conduct on SISD Transportation, whether during an extracurricular activity or regular school bus route.**

## **Exiting the Bus**

1. Stay seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and the door has opened.
2. Use the handrails and take one step at a time leaving the bus.
3. Wait for your turn to leave the bus. Pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
4. Students must move away from the bus as soon as they Do not chase or hang onto the bus at any time. Stay out of the bus "Danger Zone."

5. If crossing the street, cross in front of the bus and wait for the driver to signal.
6. If an article drops or rolls near or under the bus, get the attention of the driver immediately and have the driver assist you to retrieve the article. Do not attempt to retrieve the item without the assistance from the bus driver. Keep your eyes on the bus driver at all times.

## Dropping off Pre-K, Kindergarten and Special Needs Students

Parents or a documented designee **must be at the bus stop** to receive Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten students at the end of the school day. If no one is there to receive the student, the student **will be** returned to the campus. It is the responsibility of the parent to see that students who are returned to school are picked up. **Any student returned three (3) times will** have their riding privileges **suspended** for two weeks. Students will be suspended for the remainder of the school year after the fourth occurrence.

**Note:** It is the parents' responsibility to ensure the safety of the student from home to the bus stop and from the bus stop to home.

## Missed Busses

If a student misses the bus, it is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to provide transportation to and from school. Parents/guardians, please instruct your children on procedures to follow if they miss the bus.

1. If the bus is missed in the morning, go home immediately.
2. If the bus is missed in the afternoon, go to the Principal's office.

Once the bus starts moving, it will not stop to pick up a late student. Do not run after a moving bus at the bus stop or at school.

## Designated Stop/Changes

Students will be picked up and dropped off at the student's designated bus stop. Only one location for pickup and drop-off will be allowed. STUDENTS CANNOT RIDE ANOTHER BUS WITH FRIENDS. An alternate stop cannot be granted.

## Prohibited Items on the Bus

- Tobacco
- Live animals or insects
- Glass containers
- Alcoholic beverages, drugs or chemicals
- Weapons, explosive devices, stun guns, pepper spray, sharp objects or firecrackers
- Objects such as (large musical instruments, large shop projects or large tri-folds)
- All items must be kept on the student's lap or within the seating compartment and may not deny another student a seat.
- Balls, balloons and skateboards
- Food or drinks (no eating or drinking on the bus)
- Matches or lighters
- Sound producing electronic devices or headphones
- Any other item prohibited by the SISD Student Code of Conduct

## Accidents or Emergencies

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. If you must leave the bus, stay in a group and move to a safe location as directed.

3. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
4. Students nearest the door will open the door and hold it open.
5. Leave the bus in a single file as quickly and quietly as possible.
6. Evacuation will start with the seat nearest the front door unless otherwise instructed.
7. Follow the driver's instructions completely.

## Discipline

The school bus is an extension of the classroom and discipline will be administered by the Transportation Behavior Administrator with assistance from the bus driver. All school board policies that apply to student conduct and other student-related activities apply to the school bus. The following procedures shall be followed when discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. The driver may pull the bus over and stop in order to safely manage student behavior.
2. If the student refuses to comply with a reasonable request, the driver will report the incident to the Campus Administrator upon returning to the Transportation Department. The notification shall be made in writing on the School Bus Safety Report.
3. The Campus Administrator shall investigate the incident and notify the driver of the action taken.

**1st report = verbal/written warning**

**2nd report = 3 day suspension from riding the bus.**

**3rd report = 5 day suspension from riding the bus.**

**4th report = 10 day suspension from riding the bus.**

**5th report = 30 day suspension from riding the bus.**

**6th report = suspension from riding the bus for the remainder of the year.**

**Student with a disability:** Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability will be made in accordance with provisions in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

**Tutorials/Extra-curricular activities, etc.:** A student who is suspended from any bus AM, PM, Mid-day, Shuttle, is also suspended from any bus related to an

Extracurricular activity.

**Note:** At the discretion of the Transportation Department, bus riding privileges may be suspended due to the nature of the infraction.

The student will be given a copy of the report to take home. Parents will be contacted by the Campus Administrator.

**Note:** In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other students or the driver, the student(s) may be removed from the bus by any school official or law enforcement assistance.

**Serious Violation:** The Campus Administrator has the authority to bypass steps from serious violations or to repeat a step if the behavior is not a serious violation. Some examples of a serious violation are fighting, cursing, threatening the driver, etc.

The Campus Administrator may impose additional consequences or take appropriate additional disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct which could include the removal of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

## Other Policies

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR TRIPS**

1. Bus rider rules apply to all school-sponsored events.
2. Discipline will be the responsibility of the campus Principal and the trip sponsor/chaperone.
3. Strict loading and unloading time schedules will be followed.
4. Field trip buses will be given notice by the driver when the bus is (15-20) minutes upon return to the designated campus for parent/guardian notification.

**Note:** A student who is suspended from any bus AM, PM, Mid-day, Shuttle, is also suspended from any bus related to an Extracurricular activity.

### **MEDICINE**

No medication prescribed or over the counter can be transported to school. Asthma inhalers with proper identification can be transported to school with the student.

### **RESTITUTION**

Be courteous and respectful. All Somerville ISD Campus and Transportation policies and rules are enforceable within 300 feet of any SISD bus stop or campus. Respect school property in and around the bus stop. Do not damage, deface or vandalize the school bus or related equipment. Students who violate this rule will be required to pay for damages and lose their bus privileges for a period of time to be determined by the Campus Administrator.

### **BAD WEATHER**

If school is in session, the buses will run. School will be dismissed only upon instruction from the Superintendent of Schools.

### **DETECTION**

Individual school buses may be equipped with video cameras that will record the conduct of students and any verbal communication between students and driver. This recording may be used for disciplinary purposes.

The above rules of conduct, as well as the Student Code of Conduct, apply to Somerville ISD students who are being transported by buses or other vehicles owned, operated, and controlled by the school district.

Pursuant to Texas Education Code §26.009, the district may, without consent of a child's parent/guardian, make a videotape or recording of the child "for the purposes of safety, including the maintenance of order and discipline in common areas of the school or on school buses." However, under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), videotapes revealing images of students and other "personally identifiable information" are protected from disclosure absent parent/guardian consent. Therefore, if a parent/guardian wishes to view a bus video recording in response to a disciplinary action, the parent may do so only if the video does not include any other child or children.