TO: ALL PARENTS, FAMILIES, & STUDENTS

FROM: WINDSOR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

The information in the following paragraphs should be useful to you regarding the regular Home-to-School transportation program of this district.

BUS ROUTES

Your bus route schedule may be attached to this packet. If it is not, please request a current bus schedule from your school office or from the Transportation Dept. Bus routes and stops remain rather constant over time. You are urged, however, to check the current schedule, identify your route identification number and become familiar with the bus stop location. Students are assigned a “designated” school bus stop according to the home or daycare address information given to the school by the parent. If you are unsure of your child’s “designated” bus stop, please call the Transportation Dept. office.

Bus routes are identified by “route number” rather than “bus number”. The route number is posted on a changeable placard mounted on each bus body to the left of the entrance door.

We encourage all parents to have their children arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the posted stop time. Bus stop times may change or vary depending on ridership changes. The Transportation Dept. makes a point to notify students and parents of any permanent route changes needing to be made throughout the school year.

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL BUS STOPS

Students should be particularly careful when walking to and from school bus stops. Parents should accompany young children to the bus stop and assist in keeping order while waiting for the bus. Children should be instructed to keep on sidewalks or on the shoulder, and far away from the main traveled portion of the roadway. Children should pay close attention to traffic, weather conditions, and visibility conditions. Visible clothing, or clothing and backpacks with reflective material should be worn at all times. Children should remain orderly at all times and refrain from boisterous conduct or “horseplay” while walking to and from the school bus stop. Children should not engage in conversation with strangers or accept rides from passing motorist. When walking to or from a bus stop, children should face traffic.

GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT AT SCHOOL BUS LOADING ZONES

Students should wait in an orderly fashion while at the bus stop in the morning. They should be at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the posted time. Students should line up at least twelve feet back from the main traveled portion of the roadway and be visible to the driver. Students should be mindful of the bus stop location. Many are in driveways and on private property. To ensure student safety and to minimize complaints regarding student conduct at bus stops such activities as pushing, shoving or “horseplay” are not allowed. Furthermore, students are not allowed to throw rocks or other objects, cause excessive noise, touch or tamper with private property or vehicles nearby. Once the bus arrives students shall wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the door of the bus to open before they may begin to move forward to board the bus. Students shall board the bus one-at-a-time, using the available handrails and move quickly to an open seat. If a student drops papers or other objects while boarding the bus, he/she should get the attention of the driver so the driver is made aware of the situation. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. THE DRIVER MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE YOU!

When exiting the bus, students should remain seated until the bus to come to a complete stop and parking brake is set. Students should wait until the door is opened before they stand up to exit the bus. Students should use handrails when leaving the bus and shall walk away from the bus to the shoulder or sidewalk and walk directly home. If a student drops papers or other objects while exiting the bus, he/she should get the attention of the driver so the driver is made aware of the situation. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. THE DRIVER MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE YOU!

SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONES

The areas closest to the perimeter of the bus are called the Danger Zones. Students are directed to be no closer than twelve feet to the bus, except when loading and unloading. The vast majority of school bus accidents and injury to
students occurs outside the bus in this Danger Zone. If a student drops papers or other objects while boarding or exiting the bus, he/she should get the attention of the driver so the driver is made aware of the situation. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. THE DRIVER MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE YOU!

SAFE RIDING PRACTICES

During the first week of school the bus driver will go over basic bus rules and expectations. Within the first semester of school, students receive instruction in safe riding practices and evacuation of a school bus, which may be supplemented by classroom activities. In a nutshell, orderly classroom behavior is expected at all times on all buses. By law, students must remain seated at all times, must keep all body parts inside the windows of the bus, and must follow all directions of the driver. The driver is responsible for the safe transportation of as many as 84 passengers, so the fewer distractions, the safer the ride. Safe riding rules are attached. Please go over these rules with your child so that he/she is aware of his/her responsibilities as a bus passenger.

SCHOOL BUS RED LIGHTS AND ESCORTED RED LIGHT CROSSINGS

Whenever the red, alternate flashing lights (near the top of the bus) are illuminated, all traffic must stop in both directions, as students will be loading or unloading the bus. By law, school bus drivers must physically escort all students, kindergarten through eighth grades, needing to cross a roadway. Many districts escort students in high school. Please be exceedingly aware of school buses that are stopped.

After September 1, 1992, Federal and State law required all new school buses in California to be equipped with a stop sign on the side of the bus near the rear. This sign activates along with the flashing red lights of the bus whenever students load and unload at all bus stops. (Note: A few of our bus stops are designated “exempt” from using these red lights due to certain safety criteria.) Some of our newest buses also have amber flashing lights next to the red ones that will be illuminated approximately 200 feet prior to the bus stop to warn motorists of the impending red lights activation.

Students that are exiting the bus at their stop must be extra cautious to exit the bus and walk away from it as quickly as possible. Please instruct your child that if he or she drops papers or books, or has forgotten something on the bus to step away from the bus as usual and then try to get the driver’s attention from a safe distance. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS AND NEVER RUN BACK TOWARDS THE BUS AFTER THE DOOR SHUTS. Once the door is shut the driver is preparing to leave the bus stop. At this point, it is very dangerous to approach the bus. The driver may not be able to see you!

California’s procedure for crossing students across roadways at bus stops is vastly different, and safer than the procedure of any other state in the nation. When a student needs to cross the road the bus is traveling on the bus stop is designated as an “ESCORTED RED LIGHT STOP”. The driver sets the parking brake, secures the bus, checks traffic, turns on the red lights, takes the key, opens the door and exits the bus with a hand-held stop sign to “escort” the student(s) across the road. The student(s) should follow all of the directions of the driver, and not cross the road until the driver verbally tells the student to proceed. This crossing maneuver is considered most dangerous and students must be aware, alert and follow all directions of the driver.

FEES FOR HOME-TO-SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Windsor Unified School District has adopted a fee for school transportation and an application for the bus pass is included in this packet (or has been given separately upon registration). Please make haste in sending your check so that we may process your child’s pass as quickly as possible.

State funding for school transportation covers approximately 31% of the total cost of providing school transportation for your child. The remainder must be paid out of the general operating funds of the school district. In an effort to reduce the impact, and in these tentative financial times, the district has adopted fees. The fees offset approximately 12% of the total cost of transporting your child. These fees are intended to keep the school transportation service your child receives intact, not to enhance the service level. In addition, students are expected to behave properly at all times on the bus. Refunds of the fee will not be considered if the student has experienced a suspension from the bus.

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