



School Bus Rider Handbook

Revised: June 2022



A NOTE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

PARENT/GUARDIAN:

As a bus rider, parents/guardians and students acknowledge that riding a school bus implies and acknowledges full understanding, acceptance and agreement with the following guidelines.

The Sand Springs Public Schools Board of Education realizes that school bus transportation is an integral part of the modern day educational process. At the same time, the State of Oklahoma has determined that school bus transportation is to be considered a **privilege** and **not a right** of the students attending the state's public schools (70 OS 9-101). Because of these two facts, and because the Board has decided to extend transportation privileges to those who are eligible, the following procedures have been established to facilitate safe transportation of the district's students.

<chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Rules-Ch30Sub5Transportation.pdf>

CHAPTER 30. SCHOOL FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION SUBCHAPTER 5. TRANSPORTATION 210:30-5-1. District operation and management (a) Administration. The local superintendent and board of education shall be held responsible for applying these regulations to all pupil transportation under their administration and supervision... (1) A student must live in a school district authorized by law to furnish transportation. (2) A student must live one and one-half (1 1/2) miles or more by commonly traveled road from the school attended. Students living less than one and one-half (1 1/2) miles from school may be transported, but shall not be counted in determining state aid.

Sand Springs generously provides transportation for elementary school students beginning at ½ mile (driving distance) from the school location and secondary students beginning at 1 mile (driving distance) from the school. Parents of students that live inside the zone (½ mile for elementary and 1 mile for secondary) are responsible for student transportation.

Dependent School Districts

<https://sde.ok.gov/student-transportation-district-forms-information>

The University of Oklahoma in collaboration with the Oklahoma State Department of Education has developed a transportation area map to assist districts in determining the area they may transport students without collaboration with the neighboring district. Dependent school district transportation areas have been assigned to independent districts for the sole purpose to allow the independent district authorization to transport students in the dependent district for only the grades not offered.

Keystone and Anderson Public Schools are dependent upon Sand Springs. We transport students grades 9th - 12th only for students wishing to attend Sand Springs Public Schools.

GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES

These guidelines are in place to protect the safety of all students who are transported by bus. They will not supersede, but are in addition to all Board adopted policies, and building level student handbooks as the bus is an extension of the classroom. We carry the most precious cargo in the world: our children.

REGISTRATION OF RIDERS

Each student must be registered as a bus rider before they can ride a school bus. You can register your student by calling the Transportation office at (918)246-1529.

IN DISTRICT TRANSFERS

At this time, the SSPS Transportation Department does not have any "Transfer Buses". If an elementary student lives in another elementary district than the student attends, the parent is responsible to transport the student to the enrolled elementary school.

STUDENTS NOT RIDING

If a student does not ride for **two(2)** consecutive weeks, the bus will not return or stop until you notify the Transportation Office (918-246-1529) that the student will again be riding.

BUS STOP POLICIES

In order to provide the safest possible care for your students while they ride the bus, and to correctly plan for the number of students riding any given bus. Students will also get on and off the bus only at their assigned stop.

STOP TIME POLICY

Any time the school bus has to stop and waits an unnecessary amount of time for a student to arrive, board, or depart, the bus is delayed for any following students. When this happens the effect is multiplied by many students, the delay can be dramatic (i.e. cold winter day).

We ask **that all students be at their assigned bus stop 10 minutes before the bus arrives**. When the bus arrives, we schedule 7 seconds for each student to board the bus (ie. 21 seconds for 3 students) and for the bus to resume its route.

Any student who is not in the process of boarding the bus within the allotted 7 seconds will be left behind.

Please remember, it is our responsibility to make sure the bus arrives at a predefined bus stop within 5 minutes of our scheduled time, it is the responsibility of the parent/student to watch for the bus and be at the stop when the bus arrives. It is not the responsibility of the bus driver to watch for children at any location other than the bus stop (ie. porches, garages, under trees, etc.)

GROUP STOP POLICY

To improve efficiency and safety, the Sand Springs School District has elected to use a Group Stop Policy. By this policy, Bus Stops will generally be placed at intersections and students will walk to this location to meet the bus. In other situations, Bus Stops may be placed in other locations where a group of students can meet such as the center of a block or public locations.

LIGHTING AND STOP ARM

In the event that you see a driver passing one of our buses illegally, please feel free to call and report it to us or Sand Springs Police. 47 OK Stat § 47-11-705

The driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking a school bus that is stopped to take on or discharge school children, and on which the red loading signals are in operation, is to stop the vehicle before it reaches the school bus and not proceed until the loading signals are deactivated and then proceed past such school bus at a speed which is reasonable and with due caution for the safety of such school children and other occupants. Any person convicted of violating the provisions of this subsection shall be punished by a fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00).

VIDEO/AUDIO CAMERAS

Buses are equipped with video cameras. A 1974 federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), requires schools to enact and enforce policies to safeguard the confidentiality of students' "education records." Courts have ruled that the bus videos are "education records" that contain images and information about a variety of individual students, therefore, because of F.E.R.P.A. they may only be viewed by Transportation Personnel, School Administrators, and/or by Law Enforcement Personnel. The videos are reviewed to confirm various violations and to verify student identity.

BUS DISCIPLINE - GOALS

Riding the bus is a privilege and as such, can be granted or taken away based on the students' conduct and behavior. The student is responsible for their own conduct. They should treat each other, the bus driver, faculty, staff and property with respect. They should be aware that when their behavior distracts from the ability to provide safe transportation services, a consequence will result.

BUS DISCIPLINE - POLICY

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY POLICY

Guidelines are established to ensure a driver is not distracted. Anything that distracts them from this could result in serious consequences. Any behavior that disturbs, distracts, or annoys the driver is considered a safety hazard and will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will result in the student being placed in the disciplinary process. The disciplinary process is cumulative throughout the school year.

Do:

1. Arrive to stop location 10 minutes before the published pick up time
2. Cross in front of the bus (not behind)
3. Respect self, others and staff
4. Remain seated (The driver may assign seats)
5. Keep the aisle clear
6. Keep everything inside the bus (hands, arms, belongings should not be hanging out the windows)
7. Refrain from excessive or distracting noise
8. Use earphone with video/audio devices
9. No food, gum, candy, or drinks
10. Closed top bottles of water are permitted.

Do Not:

1. Do not bring weapons
2. Do not bring alcohol, tobacco, drugs, vaping devices
3. Do not spray personal hygiene items (this causes allergic reactions for some drivers and students and poses as safety risk)
4. Do not bring animals

Other:

1. Balls, skateboards or instruments must be completely secured in a closed bag/carrying case.
2. Do not damage the seats. Damage to the seat is subject to a fine of \$75 per seat with a loss of riding privileges until the fine is paid.

Examples of misconduct:

Depending upon severity and age expectations of the student, a parent/guardian will be notified via phone call, email and/or written letter. The circumstance may be documented by write up and documented on the student transportation profile. The consequences can range from a warning up to 15 days suspension or full loss of riding privileges.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS: IMPROPER CONDUCT (MINOR OFFENSE)

For those first time offenses which might be categorized as “minor”, such as those in the list below, the bus driver may choose to re-assign the student to a specific seat, confer with the student, or call the parents. If the driver is not successful in stopping the students’ behavior, a write up will be issued.

This category could include, but is not restricted to, any of the following:

1. Loud talking, yelling, or screaming.
2. Rude, disrespectful, or annoying behavior.
3. Shouting or yelling out the window.
4. Not keeping all body parts on the inside of the bus.
5. Obscene gestures to other passengers or to those outside the bus.
6. Use of cell phones or other electronic devices without headphones or ear-buds.
7. Taking pictures or videos or making voice recordings on the bus of another person.
8. Touching or putting hands on another student.
9. Violation of safety procedures that could endanger anyone.
10. Any instance of ‘horseplay’ including: teasing, hitting, pushing, shoving, or tripping.
11. Distracting the driver.
12. Arguing with or showing disrespect to the driver.
13. Not sitting in their assigned seat.
14. Standing up, standing on your knees, sitting on a backpack, turning around in the seat, or otherwise not sitting seat-to-seat and back-to-back.

MAJOR OFFENSES

This category could include, but is not restricted to, any of the following:

1. Failure to immediately and correctly identify themselves.
2. Possession of prescription drugs not prescribed for the student, illegal drugs, related drug paraphernalia which includes devices used to abuse inhalants and/or alcoholic beverages.
3. Smoking, chewing, or possession of tobacco/e-cigarette products.
4. Vandalizing or damaging bus property is prohibited and will result in a fine and suspension until the fine is paid.
5. Physical assault, verbal threatening, harassment, intimidation, or endangering the well-being of another person.
6. Any act that seriously jeopardizes the safety of the student, any passengers or the bus driver.
7. Picking on other students after being told to stop.
8. Getting on or off the bus at an incorrect/unassigned stop location.
9. Throwing/shooting any items on or in the bus (examples include backpacks, books, pens/pencils, hornets, blow darts, spit wads, rocks)
10. Throwing anything out the window.

If a SEVERE violation is committed, the following process will be in effect. (ie. physical assault, sexual misconduct, possession of any type of weapon, threat of violence)

When a severe offense is committed, a student will be immediately removed from the bus and may be suspended for up to the rest of the school year. Depending upon the situation, the student may be suspended from all bus riding privileges indefinitely. A parent or guardian and the appropriate school principal will be notified by the Transportation Director (or designee). The future disposition of the student's riding status could be determined to include all or part of the next school year depending on the date or the severity of the incident.

Any violation of these rules may be sufficient reason to discontinue bus transportation privileges to the student involved and may cause suspension or expulsion from school.

TYPICAL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

When a write-up for behavior is submitted, the following process can be expected.

The length of suspension will vary by grade level and severity. The following is an example of a typical disciplinary process.

Transportation Staff will initiate a pre-suspension call to parents or suspension notice of up to 15 days from the school bus (incremental 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, and 15 days). Parents and school officials will be notified of this suspension and dates transportation may continue. If a student boards the bus before the continuation date, the suspension will be extended the number of days boarded. After a 15 day suspension, if behavior continues a mandatory minimum suspension from all buses for 1 semester will be imposed. Suspensions **will** carry over the end of one semester to the next or up to a maximum of 1 school year (36 weeks). Suspensions may carry from one school year to the next. The parent or guardian will be notified of this by Transportation. The disciplinary process is cumulative throughout the school year and **will continue across holidays and summer breaks**. Students are held responsible to be good bus citizens over the entire course of the school year.