



# San Diego Unified

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Transportation Department Safety & Training

### Unit 9: Passenger Management

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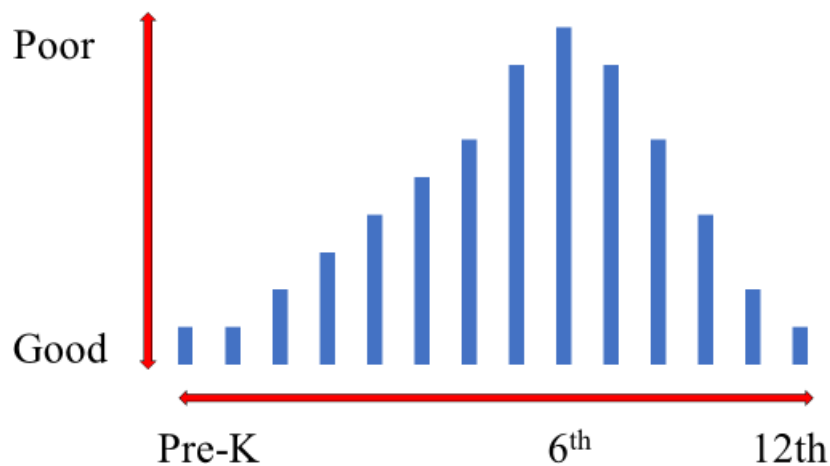
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## Introduction

A professional bus driver should always have a general knowledge of the passengers. Your success in managing passengers will depend largely on your ability to manage yourself and to get cooperation from others. Generally speaking, the background and personality of your passengers may vary widely from yours; therefore, it is essential that you understand the basic psychological patterns of your passengers.

One of the first obstacles that you may encounter as a new driver is the adjustment of your attitude to deal with today's society. From the first time that pupil looks at you in the driver seat until your last good-bye at the end of the day, you are a part of that child's environment. Like everyone else, children are responding constantly to their changing environments and children themselves change quickly. Your personal knowledge of individuals transported will not be as intimate as that of the teacher because you will be with the pupils only a short time each day. Even though you may not get to know each child well, there are behavior patterns you can anticipate within various age groups.

# Behavior Curve



This behavior curve illustrates a general pattern of activity. Of course, it does not apply to every child; however, it is a useful tool. If you are aware of the stages most children go through, you can adjust your attitudes and approach to each child more sympathetically. The use of proper management techniques will reduce the number of discipline problems while transporting pupils. The key to being a successful pupil manager is the understanding that each child is an individual with individual needs.

### **Pre-K, Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

Let's progress around the behavior curve with a boy named Johnny. First, look at Johnny as a pre-school youngster. His activity is very much restricted and regulated. He is schooled at home with almost no outside experience.

Pretty soon Johnny is ready for kindergarten where, again, almost everything that he does is regulated and he expects and accepts this regulation. The few times he does something on his own he is under close supervision. Soon, he will be ready for the next step.

The next step from kindergarten to first grade is in itself not too big a step, from first grade to third grade things begin to happen at an increasingly rapid rate.



In the first to third grade bracket, he is beginning to be allowed just a little bit of freedom of action. At home, he may be allowed to go next door and play in the yard with his friends. At school, he is still a part of a group. His every activity is directed and he is closely supervised.

As a bus rider, he presents few disciplinary problems because he has no reason to be aggressive. His memory span is short and the bus driver must expect to constantly remind him and his group to remain seated, to hold down the noise level and to obey other bus safety rules. This is normal and expected behavior.

As Johnny progresses into the latter stages of this age grouping, there is a little relaxation of the constant regulations and observation, and he is beginning to move about independently. At home, he is allowed a little more freedom. He may be able to visit down the block. At school, his teacher is beginning to allow him to use his own ideas in drawing and a few other things.

As a bus rider, he is beginning to be conscious of his responsibility, although at times, he may experiment and do things he knows he should not do. Even so, he can be talked to and directed as part of a group with good results. The transition that we have been discussing up to this point is a more gradual one than are some of the later periods.

### **Fourth and Fifth Grades**

The next grouping is the fourth and fifth grades. Beginning in the fourth grade, Johnny will probably have his first experience with more than one teacher. For a short period each day, he will probably have a second teacher for sports or physical education. He is probably, for the first time, getting away from the teacher-parent image. He is being challenged for the first time in his life by competition.

For the next three years, he is constantly growing and expanding his field of operation. More is expected of him and he is given more freedom to develop. However, compared to other

children, he is still closely regulated. A point to remember with this new freedom: he is likely to be experimenting to see how far he can go.

### **Sixth Grade**

By now, he has reached sixth grade. In some cases, he attends a school where the sixth graders are the oldest children in school. Hence, there may be a tendency to show off and to prove his is one of the top guys on campus and, in many cases; a wise bus driver can channel this desire for leadership to work for them. Without proper channeling, our young man may cause behavior problems himself or may be the cause of other younger pupils' misbehaving.

Our young man has adjusted to all the problems up to the sixth grade and for one glorious year, he may be top guy on campus. He is bigger, stronger, and in some cases, a better athlete. He may be the person that most other pupils look up to.

### **Seventh Grade**

Then Johnny is promoted to the seventh grade in a junior high school and what happens? He is no longer the top guy. Suddenly, he becomes low guy on the totem pole.

The seventh grader has many problems. We have already mentioned being reduced from top guy on campus to low guy on the totem pole. In addition, he has been taken out of the familiar neighborhood school where he was very comfortable and put into a situation where there may be four or five times as many people.

In the new situation, he is now in a very real sense right back in kindergarten. What is a typical reaction? If he cannot gain or hold the attention he is accustomed to by excelling, how else can he gain that attention? By misbehaving---he tries to make himself known by whatever means.

Another problem that Johnny faces at this time is body development. Earlier on the behavior curve, not much was happening in that area. There were some changes starting back in the sixth grade, but ordinarily, not too much was happening to him physically. Another problem is the tremendous amounts of energy that he must use up.

All of these things --- the change in school environment, the change in his status on campus, the physical changes, and the overabundance of energy --- are working against that quiet, orderly bus situation that we would like to have.

A driver has to understand this and accept it as part of the occupation. Try to understand that this is part of every child's growing up. It is necessary to have some feeling for these students and to be able to work within a framework of discipline tempered with understanding.

### **Eighth Grade**

Moving on to eighth grade, we come to the top of our behavior curve. When Johnny reaches this grade, he is given more freedom --- more freedom in the selection of classes and more freedom

at home. Back in elementary school his friends were primarily from his immediate neighborhood, but now he has friends from a much wider area.

He is getting old enough and brave enough to really start experimenting with his new freedom and his emotions. He had these problems back in seventh grade, but back there he was low guy on the totem pole and was a little afraid to let his feelings out completely.

He is older now and no longer the low guy on the totem pole. He is more aggressive and more apt to show his feelings in bad behavior. It is not by accident that the eighth grade is placed at the top of the behavior curve.

### **School Organization as a Factor to Student Behavior**

A bus driver needs to understand how the school system is organized at this point on the behavior curve. Some schools are organized as 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in middle school. Or 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in middle school. And some school organizations have 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade with no separations of students into traditional groupings. The student management techniques a driver uses will depend on the school organizations they are serving.

### **Discipline is Learned, Behavior is Caused**

First let's discuss Johnny on the basis of an eighth grade graduation to high school. In this type of program, in addition to the growth and adjustment problems that were mentioned earlier, he has become top guy again. In many instances, this in itself can create inner conflicts in our typical bus rider. On the other hand, he still has all the mental, physical, and emotional conflicts to which he is trying to adjust. The natural tendencies of experimentation and aggressiveness are there or at best are being held just below the surface. He might be compared to a tightly wound spring where the tension or energy must be released, but in a controlled manner.

On the other hand, he is again at the top of the school social order. Constantly, he is being told that he is approaching young adulthood and he is expected to live up to it. He is asked to and sometimes tries to set examples for the younger students. Because of his immaturity, the examples that he gives are not always the examples that we would prefer.

The student in the eight-year program has the same adjustment problems as the three-year junior student; however, in his case, we are asking that he learn to cope with them a year earlier.

Let's discuss the sequence in a regular junior high program. The actual sequences of events are the same, but the grade level in which they occur will be a year apart.

In both situations, in the seventh and eighth grades, Johnny was very limited. He was limited in electives and, to a degree, in sports activities. As a ninth grader, he has more choice in opportunity. He is less frustrated and he is learning to live with his physical changes.

Whether in an eight-year or a nine-year program, he will give fewer problems on the bus; but when there is a problem, it will often be a more serious one. This trend of fewer but more

serious discipline problems will continue as we progress down the behavior curve. This will be true on the bus and in the classroom.

During this two or three-year period, there has been more physical, mental, and emotional growth than in any other period in the life of the child. For this reason, whether we are speaking of teachers or bus drivers, we need to have our most qualified people working in this age bracket. To be successful with this age bracket, a driver must honestly enjoy young people. A dislike or intolerance is impossible to hide.

Students instinctively try to live up to expectations; and when the driver conveys a feeling of respect for his passengers, in almost every case, this same respect is returned. A driver whose own children are in this age bracket is accustomed to the behavior pattern and is adjusted to it.

Moving down the behavior curve, notice that the illustrations show a downward path that will continue as the grade level goes up.

Remember that we have been discussing timing and not necessarily a difference in the pattern of behavior.

### **High School**

Let's take Johnny again and move on to senior high school. His status is changed again from top guy on campus to the low rung on the ladder. Again, there are serious adjustments that he has to make. He has to reestablish his place in the social order. Again, we have the situation of moving from a smaller, less crowded environment to a larger, more complex one. We have a situation where competition is more intense and scholastic pressure is beginning to build. All of these things are on the negative side, but Johnny has some positive things working for him too.

For one thing, he has been through all of these things before and he is better able to cope with them. Also, he is grouped with older, more mature students who are very nearly young adults, and the natural tendency is to try and pattern oneself after an older, more sophisticated person.

The problems that the driver of 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade pupils will encounter will be fewer in number than back in junior high. It is also true the problems that do occur can be much more serious in nature. The driver has to behave in a different manner than with elementary school pupils. On the young side of the behavior curve, children expected and accepted group instructions and demands. We lined them up in straight lines, and we probably had them assigned to sit in straight rows. This worked because that was how their lives were regulated.

Obviously, the life-style is different for the high school student, and the bus driver must adjust the approach. Many of our former riders now have their own cars. Boy-girl relationships have formed, and students are more interested in being alone than riding a bus. Many extra-curricular activities are taking place which justify borrowing the family car and the bus ride is no longer needed.

Fewer numbers certainly mean fewer problems. The most important factor is that they are growing up, and the petty little things they used to do are no longer done.

The bus driver's approach must be on a person-to-person level rather than a group level. In order to get along with these young adults, there must be a feeling of mutual respect. Respect is an emotion that cannot be demanded from another. It must be earned by one person and bestowed by another.

Try that philosophy in all your relationships and, particularly, in your role as a bus driver, and see if it doesn't make your job easier and more pleasant.

### **Characteristics of Group Behavior**

Let's discuss some of the management techniques used in managing groups of children. The atmosphere will now change somewhat. You could be dealing with a very large number of passengers of various ages all sitting behind you while you drive the bus. It is extremely important that you understand the elements of group behavior.

### **Kindergarten and Elementary School Pupils**

- Require a great deal of physical activity.
- Talking is often a substitute of physical activity.
- Very short memory and require constant reminders.
- Bear no grudge against person who disciplines them.
- Tend to forget everything that happened the day before.
- Are more sensitive to what adults think of them.
- Tend to pick on children who do not fit in with the group.

Loud talking on a bus is a problem that requires a lot of patience on the part of the driver. New bus drivers should not try to be "friends" with the passengers by letting little problems go unnoticed. All drivers should use prompt and consistent action to manage young passengers. Keep rules enforced and expect compliance by the passengers.

These younger pupils are inclined to disregard the feelings of adults, but on the other hand, are apt to be sensitive to the opinions of other people their age. They are sometimes inclined to "pick on" children who do not fit in with the group.

Drivers who transport regular education and special education students in the same bus should be on the alert to make sure pupils are not being subjected to insults or bullying based on their mental or physical abilities.

It is extremely important that drivers be careful not to allow individual children to hurt themselves socially by setting themselves up as "driver's pet". Discourage "tattletale" behavior. Do not ask individual children to reveal "secrets" about other pupils on the bus publically. On

the other hand, be on the lookout for pupils who have not learned to mix in with the crowd and engage in poor behavior to attract attention.

The characteristics of this age group of pupils often make it possible for the driver to promote group spirit “to make our bus the best”. Many bus drivers have excellent results by discussing bus rules with pupils and making them thought of as “our rules”. Some drivers develop a game of having each bus pupil group try to excel in keeping the bus clean, in stressing good behavior on the bus, and maintaining orderly conduct when loading and unloading. This method requires considerable skill from the bus driver, and new bus drivers should consult experienced drivers before attempting this type of competition.

### **High School Age Pupils**

- Girls tend to be more mature than the boys and tend to be more like each other.
- Girls tend to be more easily influenced by boys than boys by girls.
- Boy-girl relationship problems may cause trouble on the bus.
- Other students tend to cover up intimacy of couples in back of bus.
- Very concerned about their dignity and want to be treated like young ladies and gentlemen.
- Tend to have erratic behavior and are very anxious to dress and act the same as all members of their age group.

Bus drivers need to be on alert for “couples” engaging in inappropriate behavior on the bus. Stop such inappropriate behavior as soon as you become aware of it.

Bus drivers who transport high school pupils must be very careful about making remarks concerning administrators or teachers. High school pupils are chronic gossips, and any disparaging remark made by the bus driver will be widely circulated and magnified in the telling of stories. Bus drivers should keep to a very high standard of professionalism.

### **Troublemakers**

Pupils likely to misbehave on the bus may often be identified by the way in which other pupils act toward them. In a group of high school aged pupils on the bus, normally from two to five pupils are apt to be potential troublemakers, and these pupils will be easily identifiable by the bus driver after making a few trips. Young bus drivers must expect the older pupils to resent any great show of authority by them, and therefore, the young drivers should not hesitate to ask the aid of a supervisor or principal to help them solve problems involving these pupils.

### **Elements of Group Behavior**

#### **Group Troublemakers**

High-school age pupils tend to organize in groups or gangs due to the normal tendency of any “grown-up” to belong to a group. Most gangs are formed by groups of like social or racial



background and are primarily formed for perceived “protection” or promoted by some pupil who aspires to a position of leadership or power. Any action against a member of the “group” becomes an action against the entire group; and, if a group member refuses to go along with the majority, he/she is often punished by the “group”.

Among the best ways to deal with this type of bus behavior is to ask schools or transportation officials to assign the members of this group to ride separate buses or have the entire “group” removed from the bus until they agree to follow the bus rules. If the “leader” of the “group” can be readily identified, it may be well to first take action against him/her, and often the “group” will stop causing trouble if the leader is no longer among them. Sometimes a pupil who is acting out poorly is being directed by another pupil to do so. Identifying the agitator(s) can go a long way to solving discipline issues on bus rides.

### **Group Leaders**

On every bus there will be pupils who, through athletic, scholastic, or social activities, are natural leaders of the group. They do not actively work at leadership, but the other pupils naturally fall in with what the natural leader might suggest or the manner in which the leader acts. These natural leaders tend to show good leadership and it is important that the bus driver know who these pupils are and endeavor to encourage this sort of leadership.

In dealing with these pupils, it is important not to embarrass them by forcing them to appear on the side of the driver or to make them “look bad” in front of the group by not giving them a chance to “back down gracefully” in case they have been out of line in their behavior.

### **Techniques of Group Control**

If an individual pupil is guilty of breaking the rules of bus conduct, do not “bawl him/her out” in front of all pupils riding the bus. On the other hand, if the general bus safety is being threatened by several pupils, a driver should point out their misbehavior in front of all the bus passengers.

A case in point is the lighting of matches by bus passengers. Playing with fire is extremely dangerous and threatens the safety of all bus passengers. Pupil(s) playing with fire should be stopped immediately and should be called out for their dangerous behavior in front of all bus passengers. This sets a precedent that dangerous behavior will not be tolerated. On the other hand, individual behavior problems which do not affect all the other passengers on the bus are better handled in a private or more discrete manner. A good rule to follow is to try to never say anything unpleasant to more than one person at a time.

### **Power Struggle**

Try to avoid a showdown or “power struggle” with a pupil in front of other pupils. It is much better to report the incident to the principal and supervisor, and ask for their help in the matter. Remember, the pupil’s behavior on the bus is probably an extension of his or her behavior in school, and the school authorities know much more about the pupil than you do most of the time.

Building good bus conduct should start the first day of the school year. Rules should be made very clear and the very first infraction dealt with promptly and firmly. **It is much easier to prevent a bad situation than to correct one.**

Young people resent, seemingly more than anything else, an appearance of real or imagined “favoritism” toward students on the part of the driver. It is easy to be lenient with normally well-balanced pupils and harsh toward those who have been giving trouble, but the driver **MUST** “play it straight down the middle.” Fair treatment will gain the respect of the driver by the passengers. Unfair treatment will result in a complete loss of respect of the driver by the passengers.

### **Never Lose Your Temper**

In the event of an argument or misunderstanding, the driver should remember the less emotion displayed, the less emotion will be aroused within the student. Young people like to test adults, to see how far they can go or how much they can get away with. Behavior which is obviously in the category should be dealt with fairly but firmly.

### **Do Not Hold a Grudge**

Firmness should not be confused with harshness or unfriendliness. Many experienced drivers can go year after year without any real disciplinary problems. The secret is to let the pupils know what is expected of them, to insist on reasonably good behavior at all times on the school bus and to avoid creating unnecessary difficulties. It is much better to start out the year being extremely exacting and gradually mellow if the bus behavior remains satisfactory. On the other hand, if a pupil who has been out of line in the past but is showing signs of calming down and complying with the bus rules, don't keep bringing up past wrongs and be unfairly harsh with the pupil. Let the past be and move on. Don't hold grudges.

Each student should be supplied with a copy of the rules for bus behavior. These rules should be worked out with the principal or supervisor and bus drivers and should be adopted by the governing board. It is often desirable for the principal to have an assembly of all pupils riding the bus to discuss and explain these rules. The bus driver should strictly enforce every rule in a fair and impartial manner.

No decision of the school administration should be publically questioned by the bus driver. If one believes that an action taken was not in the best interests of harmony in bus behavior, the driver should ask to meet with the principal and/or supervisor to discuss the matter. The bus driver should be patient, but remind the administrator that the discipline of the entire bus load of pupils is threatened if no action is taken against chronic offenders.

### **Inviting Trouble**

The exchanging of “wisecracks” and gossip with the pupils is an excellent way for the bus driver to **invite trouble**. Always remember, your position is one of responsibility and by your actions, you are aiding in the educational program of the school district.

In dealing with school age children, never assume that all is well and that there is no need to keep a firm hand on things. A minor incident can easily flare up into a major problem that can quickly get out of hand. Do not put off until tomorrow the settling of minor problems, but “strike while the iron is hot.”

In speaking to the group as a whole, do not threaten the entire bus load for misdeeds of a few. Hold your fire for the pupils who are creating disorder and do not antagonize the rest of the pupils.

### **Establishing a Mutual Relationship with Passengers**

Passengers on your bus have goals of having a safe and timely ride and socializing with their friends. Drivers have a goal to provide a very important service, safely and efficiently. Establishing a relationship that allows for the accomplishment of mutual goals should be the objectives of everyone. Here are a few tips that will help drivers establish a mutual relationship with passengers:

1. Each child is an individual and therefore different, but do not allow special privileges to any pupil unless requested by school administrators. The school administration has complete records on each pupil and is better qualified to judge a pupil's needs.
2. Observe the rights and privileges of each child only as long as he/she obeys the rules of good bus behavior. The moment a pupil “gets out of line” he/she must be dealt with fairly, impartially, and in the same manner the driver treats all such offenders. In the eyes of children, the greatest sin an adult can commit is to “play favorites.”
3. Remember that all eyes are on you while you are driving the bus. Your words and actions have tremendous influence on the children riding the bus.
4. Speak quietly. Clearly, and with confidence and firmness when talking to the children on the bus.
5. Be liberal with praise of the group when they accept responsibility well and have a general pattern of good behavior. Do not single out individual students for praise before the group.
6. **Do not try to handle serious discipline cases yourself.** Refer all such cases to your supervisor and/or the school principal. Give all the facts and be sure the entire problem is understood. Usually, the child who causes problems on the bus is also causing problems in the classroom. The school administrator has the whole picture of the child while you, as the bus driver, know only bus behavior.
7. One of the most difficult problems of pupils conduct is caused by overloading the bus. Drivers should be extremely careful to see that each passenger has a comfortable seat when pupils are on the bus for 30 minutes or longer. This may mean that some pupils must change seats to better distribute the passenger load. On many school buses transporting older elementary pupils or high school pupils, the seat space allowance is not sufficient, and bus capacity may have to be lowered to allow each pupil a comfortable

seat space. Another point to remember is all pupils must be seated while the bus is in motion. This is a first principle of safety.

### **School Bus Transportation Behavior Problems**

Some behavior problems of school bus transportation and how to deal with them:

1. **Trashing the school bus stops in the neighborhood.** See that pupils conduct themselves at bus stops as they do on school grounds. This means they do not litter the ground with papers and trash or damage property in the immediate area. Although this is not the immediate concern of the bus driver, he/she should report to the principal or supervisor when this condition occurs and ask that action be taken to remedy the situation.
2. **Pushing and shoving at bus stops.** Pupils are to be at the bus stop when the bus arrives. They should be lined up in an orderly manner far enough back from the curb to be in no danger from either passing traffic or of being struck by the bus itself when it approaches for its scheduled stop. No shoving or scuffling can be allowed.
3. **Always running late to bus stops.** Students are to be expected to walk rapidly to the bus stop if they are running late. Let pupils know that the bus will depart at the scheduled time. Only wait for the student if/when they are seen by the driver walking to the bus stop. Write referrals for chronically late students. Remember your responsibilities in the law and district policies to be responsible for the students if you see them.
4. **Running up to bus as it pulls into the bus stop.** When boarding the bus, pupils should wait until the bus is stopped; then walk toward the bus from a position about 12 feet ahead of where it is stopped. This rule helps reduce the possibility of accidents where pupils are pushed or shoved against the side of the bus while it is still moving while trying to board the bus.
5. **Saving seats for friends.** Seats, especially “choice” or desirable seats, are not to be held for students who are late boarding the bus. Use first come, first served principles. This encourages pupils to be on time to the bus stops.
6. **Sitting wherever they want.** Pupils are to take, or change to, any seat assigned to them by the driver. Seat choice is a reward for good behavior. If no problems happen on bus then let pupils sit where they want.
7. **Causing trouble while boarding the bus.** Pupils are to go to their seats promptly after boarding the bus. Don’t allow to stand or gather in isles and move about the bus during loading/unloading procedures.
8. **Standing or moving pupils while bus in in motion.** Pupils should not leave their seats while the bus in in motion, and should not talk to driver while bus is in motion except in cases of emergency.
9. **Eating on bus.** Students should not be permitted to eat or drink on the bus.

10. **Opening windows.** Pupils should not open or close windows or emergency doors except when specifically requested to do so by the driver. Then only follow district policies of windows only halfway down.
11. **Trashing the bus.** Pupils should not create trash or throw trash onto the floor of the bus or out of the bus windows. Ask them to keep paper and other items put away in backpacks.
12. **Heads and arms out of bus windows.** Keep the windows no lower than halfway. This helps reduce the ability of most student to put their head out of the window.
13. **Throwing objects from bus.** No object of any kind is to be thrown from the bus, and pupils are not to shout or make offensive or any remarks to pedestrians or motorists.
14. **Blocking isles or exists of bus.** The isles of the bus must be kept clear of books, lunches, feet, etc. Never allow emergency exits to be blocked or obstructed at any time.
15. **Causing trouble exiting the bus.** Students should face forward when leaving the bus. (not turn around to say good-bye or make other comments), and to have one hand available to grasp the hand rail while stepping off bus.
16. **Crossing street unsafely.** After leaving bus, all elementary students who must cross the roadway shall be escorted by the bus driver, and they shall cross in front of the stopped bus. High school pupils SHOULD be escorted at bus stops where extreme traffic hazards exist.
17. **No notification to driver of absent pupils.** If possible, the parent, principal or teacher should notify the bus driver in advance if a pupil will not be riding the bus. Ask them to call transportation or tell driver if a student will not be riding.
18. **Getting off bus at wrong stop.** Permission to leave or board the bus at other than the normal, assigned stop is to be CLEARED with transportation, principal or teacher and written permission must be presented to the driver. (temporary bus pass)
19. **Not reporting damage to bus.** Students are to report any damage to bus seats or windows to the bus driver in order to not be blamed or charged with responsibility for such damage. Drivers should always check bus before and after trips for damage and other issues.
20. **Unauthorized passengers.** No persons are to ride the school bus without written permission from school authorities. Parents may ride with permission only. If an unknown pupil wants to ride the bus, contact transportation for guidance. If permission cannot be obtained, transport the pupil to school and deliver him/her to school authorities. Do not leave a child standing on the street with no parent or guardian to take custody.

### **Bus Safety Rules**

The following simple rules or similar rules should be posted in every bus and enforced by every bus driver.

1. Remain seated while bus is in motion.

2. Keep arms and head inside bus.
3. Avoid loud and unnecessary noises.
4. Refrain from eating on bus.
5. Profanity is inexcusable.
6. Refrain from boisterous conduct.
7. No smoking on bus.
8. Cross street in front of bus when directed by the bus driver.

The rules of the bus are for the pupil's protection. Violations of the rules may result in suspension of bus riding privileges.

### **Do's and Don'ts of Pupil Management**

Earning the respect of the passengers takes time and consistent practices of good common sense.

#### **Do's:**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Always be courteous.</li> <li>2. Always control your temper.</li> <li>3. Keep calm.</li> <li>4. Act the part of a driver in a responsible position, conscious of your important job.</li> <li>5. Do everything possible to develop the idea that the pupils themselves have important responsibilities in ensuring group safety.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Maintain close contacts with principals, and secure their cooperation.</li> <li>7. Seat your troublemakers near you within your vision.</li> <li>8. Be kind, but firm.</li> <li>9. Show interest in things that interest students.</li> <li>10. Clearly establish your standards of behavior.</li> </ol> |
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#### **Don'ts:**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Don't let things go too far before taking the proper steps to correct them.</li> <li>2. Don't try to discipline a whole group.</li> <li>3. Don't be lax one day and get tough the next; be consistent.</li> <li>4. Do not scream.</li> <li>5. Don't threaten to do something you cannot do.</li> <li>6. Don't threaten to do something and not do it.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Don't hold grudges</li> <li>8. Don't use bad language.</li> <li>9. Don't be too familiar with students.</li> <li>10. Don't argue with students or parents.</li> <li>11. Don't make wisecracks.</li> <li>12. Don't use physical force; observe the policy of "hands off."</li> </ol> |
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## Discipline

Discipline on buses is probably the biggest problem confronting bus drivers. It has been given national attention through newspaper publicity and magazine articles. The tendency to place the entire burden for conduct upon the bus driver is disappearing, and the need for cooperative effort is being recognized. The only lasting solution is the creation of a morale and standard of citizenship which encourages the cooperative conduct of pupils. This requires a cooperative effort and study of the problem. The bus driver is responsible for the conduct of pupils on the bus but must have the backing of the school administration to effectively discharge the responsibility. In cases of continued misconduct, the bus driver should report the pupil to the supervisor or principal and ask that some action be taken toward withdrawal of the pupil's privilege to ride the bus.

In many districts, the first action taken is a reprimand or a withdrawal of bus riding privileges for a short time, usually three to five days. If the pupil's behavior does not improve when he/she returns, denial may be for the remainder of the school year, or the pupil may be removed to another bus. This is usually done after all other measures have failed to improve the situation.

Drivers must understand the principles of passenger behavior and know how to approach passengers in a manner that will effectively gain their respect. Parents and pupils recognize an orderly, well managed bus and will condemn bus drivers who are lenient and do not have control of their passengers.

Passenger discipline or control demands that all talking to the pupils must be done without shouting, excitement, or evidence of irritation. Bus drivers must be careful in their talks with the passengers never to threaten them with violence. Drivers must carry out their instructions to the passengers with no evidence of favoritism. Drivers who overlook violations of conduct by one passenger lose the respect of the other passengers. Driver must strike a happy medium by not being too lenient or too harsh, as both extremes are equally bad for the morale of the passengers on the bus. The attitude of the driver should be friendly, cheerful, and businesslike.

The bus driver should strive to build morale and cooperation with the passengers. This can be done by being friendly, courteous, and helpful. In the course of time, the passenger's morale will be a great source of help in controlling those passengers who are the worst offenders. When passengers discover that improper conduct is not acceptable to the group, offenders will hesitate to do things which cause them to lose "face" with the group. One of the best approaches to building morale is to **give the passengers a chance to participate in drafting or revising the rules and regulations** for maximum safety on the bus. Helping pupils and parents in cases of emergency is usually appreciated. All approaches which tend to create better relationships should be constantly kept in mind.

The bus driver must maintain order on the bus and, in doing so, should keep in mind the following simple rules:

1. **Stop the bus** is the behavior problem is a serious one. If it is a minor infraction, a word of warning over the speaker system or remark directed to the offender may suffice. If the

infraction more serious in nature, stop the bus. The fact that you have taken this action makes the passengers realize the situation is one that is out of the ordinary.

2. **Stand up and speak to the offenders** in a courteous manner but in a firm voice. There must be no anger involved, but all passengers must realize you “mean business.”
3. If a change in seating is needed, the **passenger should be moved to a seat near the driver** so behavior may be more closely observed.
4. You (bus driver) have no legal right to put a passenger off the bus except at his or her regular stop. However, if an emergency situation develops in which you feel very drastic action is needed, **stop the bus** and **call dispatch or send a responsible passenger or adult to notify the supervisor or principal** of the happening. Do not move the bus until one of these persons has responded to the call. Before denying the passenger of the right to be picked up in the morning, check with supervisors or principal regarding the pupil and follow the directive they put forward.

### **5 CCR § 14103 Authority of Driver**

(a) Pupils transported in a school bus or in a school pupil activity bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street, highway or road. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation. **A bus driver shall not require any pupil to leave the bus enroute between home and school or other destinations.**

(b) **Governing boards shall adopt rules to enforce this section.** Such rules shall include, but not be limited to, specific administration procedures relating to suspension of riding privileges and shall be made available to parents, pupils, teachers, and other interested parties.

### **Board Policies**

The governing board of a school district has the right (and responsibility) to adopt rules and regulations governing pupil transportation in its district as long as those rules and regulations do not conflict with state and federal laws or regulations.

The Education and Vehicle Codes contain laws which are usually prefaced by “may” or “shall”. “**May**” indicates that they may permit or allow something to be done, and “**shall**” means it must be done.

As a general rule, the school board appoints someone as its representative in handling transportation affairs and adopts the rules under which this person is to operate.



## Parent Responsibility

Parents do have a responsibility in helping the school maintain a safe and efficient transportation system. The school administration and the bus driver should let the parents know what they can do to help.

Some suggested methods of communicating with parents are:

1. Distribute student and parent handbooks.
2. Organize a PTA program on transportation.
3. Send school bulletins home from school.
4. Conduct a program on transportation during Public School's Week.

There are many other ways to bring bus safety awareness to the public.

Parents are expected to have their children ready on time and to inform them that they are to maintain good behavior at the bus stop as well as on the bus.

An open line of communication must be maintained between parents, school authorities and the bus driver, so that when problems do develop, parents are aware of them.

## Teacher Responsibility

As part of a team, teachers do have some responsibility in the operation of a transportation system. They can be of great help to the driver in handling discipline problems.

A pupil is under the teacher's supervision for a much longer period of time during the school day and the teacher has a chance to see the pupil's perform in many different ways; therefore, he or she is aware of the pupil's strong points as well as weak points.

A driver has only a short time during the day in which to observe the pupil; therefore, good communication between the driver and the teacher can be of great value in helping the driver understand the actions of a particular child.

The classroom can be a good place to explain bus safety. Many districts use this to their advantage.

When a teacher is aboard your bus for a field trip, etc., it is the driver's responsibility to cooperate in every way with the teacher's wishes as long as those wishes do not interfere with bus safety rules. Teachers should be made aware of these rules before the trip is taken so that they may help maintain order. (do not argue with teachers in front of the pupils!).

When a teacher is aboard the bus, the driver still has the primary responsibility to maintain order. The teacher is there merely to help the driver; the driver is still in charge of all aspects of the bus, including the conduct of passengers.

### **Pupil Responsibility**

Pupils have responsibilities which they must meet if they are to retain the privilege of riding to and from school on the bus. These responsibilities are:

1. Be on time
2. Obey the driver
3. Be courteous
4. Help to keep the bus on schedule
5. Cross the road in front of the bus only after the driver has indicated it is safe to do so
6. Remain seated while bus is moving
7. Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus at all times.
8. Help keep the bus clean.
9. Do not deface the bus (cutting or writing on the back of seats, etc.).
10. Follow the recommended safety precautions given by the driver. It is the responsibility of pupils to conduct themselves properly while walking home from the bus stop.

### **Driver Responsibility**

The last few subjects explained the responsibilities of other people. What about the drivers? What is expected of them? The driver is responsible to:

1. The entire community.
2. The school board.
3. School administrators.
4. Teachers.
5. Parents.
6. Students.
7. Safety in general.

The school board expects the driver to observe all the provisions of the Vehicle Code and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations prescribed by the State Board of Education, any other state agency, and the said governing board, relating to the transportation of pupils.

The pupils riding the bus expect you to maintain a schedule just as they obey the rules of good behavior.

Teachers expect common courtesy from you just as you do from them in answering questions regarding routing schedules and student behavior.

Assistants expect the full cooperation of the bus driver when riding the bus to help with the handling of students, such as the special education children.

Again, it should be made clear that the driver carries full responsibility for everyone aboard the bus.

Escorting pupils across the roadway is one of the biggest responsibilities of the driver and shall, at all time, follow the letter of the law. (VC 22112) Any other driver or passenger aboard the bus does not have the authority to replace the driver in escorting pupils across the roadway. **This act must be done by the driver only.**

## Unit 9 Quiz

1. The school bus or SPAB driver is responsible for the orderly conduct of pupils while they are on the bus.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
2. The governing board of a school district has the right to adopt rules and regulations governing pupil transportation.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
3. Analyzing driver attitude to detect pupil management skills weaknesses should begin at the pre-employment interview process.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
4. It is the responsibility of the driver to deny transportation when he or she decides it is appropriate.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
5. Child rearing practices by parents have no connection with pupil passenger problems.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
6. To be fully effective, rules must be well publicized, consistently enforced, and nondiscriminatory.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
7. The referral system should be used when other approaches appear to have been ineffective.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
8. The bus driver's failure to appreciate that differences in values exist is never a cause of pupil management problems.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
9. Discipline policies should be developed by school personnel, parents, and pupils working together.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_
10. Many pupil passenger management problems are caused by the driver.  
True\_\_\_\_\_ False\_\_\_\_\_

11. The driver's inability to efficiently operate the bus will contribute to pupil behavior problems.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
12. An excessively large number of written citations (referrals) usually indicates the driver is weak in pupil management skills.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
13. A good working relationship with school administrators and officials will be helpful to the driver in managing student behavior.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
14. Threatening to write a referral is an effective technique, especially when the threat is not carried out.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
15. Openly criticizing the decisions of school administrators is not a good practice for bus drivers.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
16. When a teacher is on board the bus, the driver is relieved of responsibility for pupil behavior.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
17. Disadvantaged children often experience low self-esteem, and this is thought to contribute to behavioral problems.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
18. Pupil passengers can be given a chance to participate in drafting the rules and regulations for maximum safety on the bus.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
19. A referral which is well written, clear, concise and which has proper spelling is more likely to be processed effectively by school officials than one which is vague, unclear, and poorly written.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
20. Understanding the many skills a driver uses to perform his or her job and knowing how each of them works will make the job less difficult.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

21. Drivers need to understand that the transition from elementary school to junior high or middle school may be frightening for some pupils.

True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

22. Pupil management should never be a topic for an in-service training class.

True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

23. Understanding the constantly changing nature of the passengers helps the driver adapt to the challenges of pupil management.

True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

24. The inability to excel in athletics is one of many problems confronting school pupils which may lead to behavioral problems aboard the bus.

True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

25. The referral system is most accurately described as a negative approach to pupil management because it usually involves punishment.

True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_