

PARENT GUIDE

FOR

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

2009-2010 School Year

Cecil County Public Schools
August 2009-June 2010

INTRODUCTION

The safety of school children to and from school is the hallmark of our public school transportation program. Providing for the safety of our children whether transported by school buses or by other means demands the efforts of many partners including parents, students, transportation staff and school administrators. This publication highlights parental roles, student responsibilities, and bus conduct rules. They exist solely for the safety of your children.

We recommend that parents review the contents of this guide and discuss the students' responsibilities with their children. Continued cooperation and support of these rules and regulations will enable us to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system.

Henry A. Shaffer
Superintendent of Schools

The driver's first responsibility is to safely operate the bus.
The student's first responsibility is not to interfere with the driver's ability to safely operate the bus.

PARENT'S ROLE IN STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

1. Riding the school bus is a privilege.

This privilege may be temporarily denied or permanently revoked if misconduct of the student jeopardizes the safe operation of the school bus or the safety of the other students riding the bus.

2. UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BOARD THE BUS.

Only students and authorized passengers are allowed on the bus. Violators may be charged. Non-passengers shall stay back 3 feet from the bus unless authorized by the driver. Per Federal Law, under no circumstances should anyone block the doorway or otherwise hinder the operation of the bus or bus route.

3. PARENT CONCERNS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.

If you are upset over something that happened on the bus, please DO NOT go to the bus stop to have a confrontation with the driver, instead please call your student's school and talk with a school administrator.

4. Parents are responsible for the safety of their students from the time the students leave home in the morning until they board the school bus, and at the end of the day from the time they get off the bus until the students reach home. Bus stop supervision is a parent's responsibility.

Once the student enters the school bus, the responsibility lies with the bus driver and the school administration until students are unloaded at the end of their day.

5. PRE-KINDERGARTEN & KINDERGARTEN TRANSPORTATION REQUIRES APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION.

At the mid-day run, pre-kindergarten students will be let off the bus only under appropriate supervision. At the end of the day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will be let off along with other students at their stop. However, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students let off alone at a stop will be let off the bus only under appropriate supervision. Appropriate supervision would include a responsible adult or older sibling. If appropriate supervision is not provided, the driver will return the student to the school. **REPEATED INSTANCES OF SUPERVISION NOT BEING PROVIDED SHALL BE CAUSE TO REVOKE TRANSPORTATION PRIVILEGES.**

6. HAZARDOUS OR UNUSUAL CONDITIONS AT THE BUS STOP MAY REQUIRE STUDENTS TO BE TRANSPORTED BACK TO THE SCHOOL.

Drivers are trained to use their own judgment in determining if the conditions at a stop are hazardous or unusual. In such instances drivers will not let students off and will return them to the school at the end of the route.

7. CHANGE OF A STUDENT'S BUS STOP ASSIGNMENT IS RESERVED FOR EMERGENCIES. The purpose of the school bus is to provide transportation from the student's home or day care to school and back. A request to the principal for the student to ride a different bus home or to school is to be reserved for emergencies. Student safety is improved by the consistent use of one bus and one bus stop.

8. Students should leave home early enough to arrive at the designated school bus stop or crossing point TEN (10) minutes before the approximate arrival time of the bus. Students are safer being at the stop on time versus running for the bus.

Students should be visible to the bus driver at the bus stop, as the bus approaches the stop. Drivers are not required to stop when there are no students visible. Drivers are not required to wait for tardy students. At places where the bus picks up at the driveway, the house number should be readily visible by the driveway or from the road. This is supported by a 1997 Cecil County Ordinance.

9. Parents, together with their students, should develop a route to and from the school bus stop or school, which minimizes the exposure of students to vehicular traffic.

We encourage parent's supervision of their students to and from the school bus stop, using this opportunity to teach the students proper pedestrian practices.

10. Parents should be aware of their liability for damage caused by their students to the property of others, including the school bus. Damage not paid for within a reasonable time will result in a loss of bus riding privileges. Students should show consideration and respect for the bus and property of those citizens whose homes and places of business are located along their routes.

11. For inclement weather, media announcements and electronic phone calls regarding the opening of schools begin at approximately 6:00 a.m.

Please refer to specific information distributed by your student's school.

12. The application of common sense is the best method for determining the role of the parents regarding the safety of their students traveling to and from school either as passengers on a school bus or as pedestrians.

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Students Awaiting School Bus Arrival:

1. I shall not stand or play on the roadway.
2. I shall not cross the highway until the bus arrives and has come to a complete stop. Before crossing, I will look for traffic in both directions, and then pass at least ten feet in front of the bus. All crossings will be made only after the driver signals me to do so. No student shall direct traffic.
3. I shall remain in line at least five feet from the stopped bus, and move towards the bus only after the door is opened.
4. I will be at the designated bus stop at least TEN (10) minutes before scheduled arrival of the bus and will board with the least possible delay.

B. Students on the Bus

1. I will follow the driver's instructions at all times for the safety of others and myself
2. I will stay properly seated in my designated seat.
3. I will talk quietly with my seatmates & act responsibly; and I will not yell or scream or use improper language
4. I will keep my hands and feet to myself and inside the bus at all times.
5. I will respect the bus driver as the person in charge of my safety and I will respect other students and their property.
6. I will not throw anything inside the bus or throw objects out the windows.
7. I will not consume food or beverages on the bus.

C. Students Departing Bus

1. I shall, if necessary to cross the highway, look for traffic in both directions; pass at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus, and only when the driver has signaled me to do so.
2. I shall not leave the bus at any other place but at the regular stop without the written consent of a School Administrator.
3. I shall not stand in the roadway to direct traffic or to assist other students to cross the road.

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

PURPOSE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

The purpose for these rules and regulations is to provide a basic framework for safe transportation of students to and from school and for efficient operation of the Student Transportation Program. The parents/guardians, the school bus contractor, the bus driver, the school administration, and the Transportation Department of the Cecil County Public Schools share responsibility for enforcement of these rules. Riding a school bus is a privilege. Failure to comply with regulations may result in a revocation of this privilege.

USE OF AUDIO/VISUAL CAMERAS ON SCHOOL BUSES

Audio/video cameras may be placed on any school bus in order to help provide for a safe and orderly environment. They will be used to monitor student behavior and to provide student safety while riding the school bus.

Students and parents will be notified of the use of audio/video cameras on school buses at the beginning of each school year through the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, which is published in the Cecil County Public Schools yearly calendar. Additionally, a notice of the use of audio/video cameras will be posted on each school bus.

School administrators and/or Department of Transportation personnel will view audio/video tapes. Should student misconduct be evident, the student will be disciplined according to the Board of Education's Code of Student Discipline and school disciplinary policy and parents will be notified.

THE STUDENT

The student's first responsibility is not to interfere with the driver's ability to safely operate the school bus by following the established School Bus Safety Rules and the regulations outlined in The Student's Responsibilities and Rights. The student or his parent or guardian, must reimburse the owner of the school bus for the cost of repairing damage of the bus caused by the student. The student's riding privilege will be revoked if reimbursement is not made. Before the privilege is revoked, the parent or guardian shall be notified in writing that the privilege will be revoked for non-payment.

PARENT/GUARDIANS

For the safety of all students, the parents should support the school bus safety rules by impressing upon the student the importance of and responsibility for following the school bus safety rules.

THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

The driver's first responsibility is to safely operate the bus. The bus driver is expected to enforce regulations for student behavior while boarding, riding, and exiting the bus. If the driver is unable to enforce a rule, they should request assistance from the school administration. The school administration and the bus driver will work together to ensure that all students are made aware of the expectations for riding the school bus.

The driver may revoke the students' privilege of riding a bus for one school day for failure to obey any of the rules for student behavior. This authority, delegated to the bus driver, should be exercised with discretion. The driver should warn the student in advance of imposing this penalty. Depending on the severity of the student's actions, a warning may not be given.

When a bus driver intends to revoke the student's privilege of riding a bus, the driver must transport the student to the regular bus stop on the day of the student's infraction and notify the student that the privilege of riding the school bus the following school day has been denied. Infractions during the a.m. trip to school must be reported to the school administration following the morning run. Infractions during the p.m. trip home that result in a student's loss of riding privilege for the following day should be reported to the school administration as soon as possible. The school administration they may establish a procedure to delay the driver's one-day suspension pending notification of the parent for minor offenses.

THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The school administrator should provide appropriate assistance and guidance to the school bus driver and the student, when the student's behavior is not acceptable. When a student is not permitted to ride a school bus, the administrator should notify the parent or guardian in writing of the student's infraction of the applicable rule.

Riding privileges can be revoked anywhere from one (1) to twenty (20) school days at the discretion of the school administration for subsequent infractions, depending on the severity of the incident and the frequency of referrals. A variety of consequences, at the discretion of the school administrator, may be applied to improve the student's behavior. The Superintendent or his designee must approve revocation of more than twenty (20) school days. Revocation of a student's privilege to ride a school bus may automatically extend from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next school year. The Superintendent may provide additional guidelines.

THE SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTOR

The bus contractor is expected to cooperate fully by impressing upon drivers their responsibilities for supervision of students riding the bus, for maintaining effective cooperation and communications with the school administration, and for carrying out the instructions received from the Transportation Department.

THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

The Transportation Department shall review with bus drivers annually these rules and the bus driver's responsibilities for enforcement in cooperation with the school administration. In addition, the Transportation Department will collect and monitor data for all school bus related disciplinary actions.