



Purpose

To establish protocols for employees of South Shore Regional Centre for Education (SSRCE) to designate levels of authority and determine processes to follow in the event of student discipline on a school bus.

Introduction

The South Shore Regional Centre for Education (SSRCE) considers the school bus an extension of the school, and the code of conduct expected of the students is the same as that expected in the classroom. When behaviour on the bus is inappropriate, the school administrator or designate will act in accordance with the Provincial School Code of Conduct and this protocol.

Scope

The SSRCE believes that the school bus drivers and the school administrators have the responsibility and authority to maintain order and discipline on the school buses in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the school bus passengers, drivers, and others. The SSRCE gives the driver the authority to deal with discipline matters as outlined in this protocol. Furthermore, the SSRCE gives the school administrator the right to discipline students, including suspending their right to use the school bus, in accordance with the Provincial School Code of Conduct.

Definitions

Bus Suspension Review Committee: The Committee is comprised of the Transportation Coordinator, the Director of Operational Services, and one other senior level employee.

Responsibilities

School Bus Driver: The school bus driver shall be responsible for maintaining discipline when traveling on a regular bus route, extra-curricular trips, and when loading and unloading students. The school bus driver has the authority to stop any student behaviour that is disruptive, distracting, or hazardous, that in a way poses a threat to safety.

Students: Students are expected to follow the same behaviour standards while riding school buses as are expected on school property or at school activities, functions, or events. All school rules are in effect while a student is riding a bus or at the bus stop.

School Administrators: Administrators or designates shall ensure that all bused students are informed at least once per year of their responsibilities as bused students. Administrators will also ensure that documentation is forwarded to the Transportation Manager and the parent / guardian / caregiver in accordance with reporting misconduct.

Shared responsibilities: School administrators and bus drivers are to work together to ensure students know how to ride safely on the bus and how to behave on the bus. Whenever possible, school administrators should involve drivers in meetings to resolve issues on the bus. If the driver is not involved in the meeting, follow up is important.



Specific Procedure

Steps to Achieving Appropriate Student Behaviour

- Prevention steps, administered by the driver, are used by the driver to educating students about safe and appropriate bus driving behaviours, clarify the bus driver's expectations for the students, and to assist students to understand how to demonstrate safe riding habits every day (bus rule review, seating arrangements, consistency in enforcement of safety rules)
- Intervention steps, administered by the bus driver, are used by the bus driver to help the student stop unsafe or inappropriate behaviour or habits while assisting students to identify the appropriate habit or behaviour (i.e verbal reminders of bus rules not being followed immediately and calmly; talk to student individually; documentation of misbehaviour; reinforcement of positive behaviour frequently and consistently).
- Consequences, administered by school administrator or designate, occur when prevention and intervention steps are unsuccessful at improving student's behaviour or safe riding habits and a school bus discipline form (Appendix B) is submitted by the bus driver to the school administrator. The school administrator is responsible for assigning appropriate, effective consequences for the student's inappropriate behaviour in an effort to affect the necessary improvement. (Refer to Discipline)

Reporting Misconduct

- When misconduct occurs, the driver will complete the School Bus Discipline Report (Appendix B).
- The school bus driver shall report misconduct, which occurs during an afternoon bus run as soon as possible upon completion of the next morning's run.
- Bus drivers may return the bus to the school when the behaviour is extreme, dangerous, or recurring. In addition, the following conditions must be met:
 - No more than twenty minutes have passed since school dismissal.
 - A member of school administration has been contacted and assurance has been given to the bus driver that someone will be present at the school to assist in dealing with the matter.
 - If all of these conditions cannot be met it is expected that the bus driver, in cooperation with the dispatcher, will handle either the situation or contact the appropriate police agency.
- The school administrator will respond to student behaviour as per the School Code of Conduct policy. Behaviours warranting school suspension may also warrant suspension from the bus.
- When parents / guardians are contacted regarding student behaviour, the school administrator will send copies of the Discipline Report and the Notice of Offense to them.
- School administrators will forward copies of discipline reports to the Transportation Manager immediately after completion, and the bus driver will be notified of any suspension prior to commencement.
- When a student has been suspended from travelling on the bus, the parents / guardians will be notified by phone and shall receive a copy of the Discipline report and suspension letter and any relevant rights to appeal. The Transportation Manager and bus driver will be notified prior to commencement of the suspension.



Vandalism

- The SSRCE will hold the parents / guardians of a student vandalizing a school bus responsible for any damage done to the bus.
- The administrator, or designate, shall notify the Transportation Manager of such incidents so that appropriate restitution can be arranged.

Suspension Appeals

- Where the student's right to use the bus has been suspended for a period of more than five (5) days, the parents / guardians of the student have the right to appeal. The parents / guardians, or the student if he/she is the age of majority, have seven (7) days after receiving the suspension, to appeal the decision.
- An appeal hearing shall take place within ten (10) days of receipt of the request for appeal. The balance of the suspension shall be stayed until the appeal is heard and the Bus Suspension Review Committee makes a decision. A student who is suspended from both the bus and school may not return to school until the school suspension is served.
- Appeals shall be heard by the Bus Suspension Committee, comprised of the Transportation Coordinator, the Director of Operations and the Director of Programs or designate.



APPENDIX "A"

Dear Parents:

Welcome to a new school year! We ask that you review the attached bus rules for safe bus riding with your children and return a signed copy to your student's bus driver signed by both you and your child.

Statistically, children riding in a school bus are much safer than those who go to and from school in a privately owned car, walking or riding a bicycle. Federally regulated requirements have resulted in the school bus being the safest means for your students to travel to and from school.

At the South Shore Regional School Board, we believe the school bus is an extension of the classroom. Therefore, the same rules apply, except students are allowed to talk to their fellow riders in a soft tone of voice. The school bus is not an extension of the playground, lunch room. Students who ride the bus in the afternoon are not considered out of school until they leave the bus at their assigned bus stop. The bus typically has twice the number of students than a classroom, the adult has his/her back to the students and the classroom is moving at 50 km/hr.

If a student repeatedly or seriously disregards the bus rules as on back, they could lose their bus riding privileges. We are committed to working with bus drivers, parents and students to resolve bussing issues as they arise.

We hope you and your student have a safe and fun school year.

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Route #: _____ Parent/Guardian Name: _____

School: _____



Rules for Waiting at the Bus Stop:

1. Be there five (5) minutes early
2. Respect others and their property
3. Stay away from the street, road or highway
4. Keep safety in mind...no shoving, running or pushing

Procedures for Boarding a School Bus:

1. Line up in single file
2. Approach the bus only when it has stopped and the driver has opened the door
3. Don't push or crowd others
4. Use the handrail, climb the steps one at a time, and be seated quickly

Rules When Riding the School Bus:

1. Remain seated until the bus stops
2. Let the students in front get off first
3. Don't push or crowd
4. Watch your step and use the handrail
5. Move out of the "danger zone"

Instructions for School Bus Passengers:

1. The Driver is in full charge of the school bus. Obey his/her instructions.
2. Be on time. The bus will not wait.
3. Do not talk to the driver unless necessary
4. Keep the seat assigned to you by the driver.
5. Do not use foul or profane language.
6. No loud or boisterous talking, yelling or whistling.
7. Do not stand or move about while the bus is in motion.
8. Do not open windows without the driver's permission.
9. Do not put hands, arms, feet or head out of the bus window.
10. Do not throw anything inside the bus or out of the windows.
11. When the bus is in motion, keep the aisle of the bus clear at all times.
12. When it is necessary to cross the road in front of the school bus, walk 3 meters (10 ft.) in front of the school bus to a point where you can see the driver; cross to the center of the highway, STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN and cross the highway when it is safe to do so.
13. If there is no sidewalk, walk well over on the left side of the road when walking to and from the bus stop.
14. Never stand or play on the road while waiting for the bus.
15. The maximum seating capacity of this bus is _____ passengers provided the aisle of the school bus is neither wholly or partially obstructed by any person sitting in such a manner that the person's body or any part thereof, extends beyond a seat into the aisle.



ALWAYS BE CAREFUL

Procedure for Safe Crossing of Vehicle Lanes:

1. Move away from the side of the bus and to at least 10' in front of the bus
2. Turn to the driver and make eye contact
3. Wait for the driver to signal it is safe to cross
4. Walk in front of the crossing arm, stopping to check for vehicles that might violate the stop arm.
5. When it is safe, complete the crossing

Procedures for Leaving a School Bus:

1. Remain seated until the bus stops
2. Let the students in front, get off first
3. Don't push or crowd
4. Watch your step and use the handrail
5. Move out of the "danger zone"

Additional Information: To enhance safety on school buses, video and audio recording devices may be installed and maybe in operation at any time.

We have read and discussed the bus rules with our child and agree to follow them:

Parent/Guardian: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____



APPENDIX "B"
School Bus Discipline Form

Student's Name: _____ School: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Route #: _____ Driver's Name: _____

Section I: (Driver's Use Only)

The conduct of the above student is reported as being below standards required for the safety and welfare of the students riding the bus for the following:

- Will not stay in seat
- Disrespectful
- Noisy/ Loud
- Using profanity
- Using matches/lighter
- Throwing things
- Eating on the bus
- Fighting
- Destruction of property
- Littering
- Other
- Failing to obey bus driver
- Possession of banned items

Description of Student Misconduct (Be Specific): _____

Previous interventions completed by the driver. Please check which ones apply:

Date Completed: _____

- Mandatory seat assignment
- Verbal reminder
- Talked privately with student
- Bus Discipline Form sent to School Administrator

Bus Driver's Signature _____

Date submitted _____

Section II: (Administrator's Use Only)

Level of Offense: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

Action Taken by School: _____

Talked to Student Parent Notified Warning Bus Driver Notified

Suspension – 1st day of suspension: _____

Copy of report and additional documents sent to Transportation Manager

Administrator's Comments: _____

Administrator's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Copies to: Parents/Guardian Bus Driver Transportation Manager RED (for situations where a suspension is imposed)



APPENDIX "C"
Guidelines for a Bus Suspension Review Hearing

Right of Appeal

1. A bus suspension of five (5) days or less cannot be appealed.
2. A bus suspension of more than five (5) days can be appealed.
 - a) A notice of appeal must be received by the Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent from the parent/guardian or student within seven (7) days of receiving notice of the suspension.
 - b) A bus suspension review hearing must be held within ten (10) days of the Board receiving a notice of appeal.

Appeal Committee

1. The Appeal Committee is comprised of:
 - a) The Transportation Manager
 - b) The Director of Operations
 - c) A School Board Member

Bus Suspension Review Hearing

1. In addition to the Appeal Committee the following individuals would be requested to attend the Bus Suspension Review Hearing:
 - a) School Administrator or designate
 - b) Bus Driver
 - c) Student and his/her parents/guardians
2. Arrangements for the Hearing will be done by the Executive Assistant to the Regional Executive Director.
 - a) Committee members will be told the student's name and the recommendation being made.
 - b) Parents will be informed of the process and that no contact is to be made with committee members prior to the hearing.
3. The Hearing is held in-camera.
4. Administration will introduce all parties.
 - a) If the parents come with a solicitor, the meeting will be adjourned and the Regional Executive Director contacted. The Regional Executive Director will contact the Board solicitor and another hearing will be scheduled.



5. Administration will review the specific incident, the bus discipline record of the student, and other relevant background information.
 - a) A written summary of the student's bus discipline and academic record will be presented to the Suspension Review Committee members and parents.
 - b) All copies of this summary will be returned following the meeting.
6. The student and his/her parents/guardians will then be given the opportunity to present information.
7. The Suspension Review Committee may then ask questions of either party.
8. The student, parents/guardians and the administration shall be excused from the meeting while the Committee makes a decision.
 - a) Before leaving, the student and parents/guardians are told they will be informed of the decision within three (3) school days.
 - b) The administration, after being excused, will be available to the Committee to answer any questions.
9. The decision of the Committee is limited to:
 - a) Confirming the suspension,
 - b) Revoking the suspension, or
 - c) Varying the suspension.
10. The decision of the Committee is final and formal correspondence of the decision will be communicated to the parents/guardians and administrator by the Director of Operations within three (3) school days.