

## **Student Safety Walking, Biking and Riding Buses to School**

The district will adopt a comprehensive school trip safety program that addresses bus safety, walking and biking route plans, vehicle access to the school, circulation and parking at the school, pedestrian circulation on and around the school campus and safety education and enforcement.

### **A. Safety Advisory Committee**

The superintendent will establish a Safety Advisory Committee (SAC) pursuant to WAC 392-151-017 to develop and maintain a comprehensive school trip safety program. The committee will also develop and maintain the school patrol program in compliance with RCW 46.61.385 and review and approve each school's Safe Routes To School plan. The superintendent will develop specific responsibilities and reporting relationships of the committee, including how the SAC relates to individual school safety programs.

### **B. Bus Safety**

The superintendent will develop written rules establishing the procedures for bus safety and emergency exit drills and for student conduct while riding on buses. The procedures for bus safety will include rules restricting bus access to students and those persons authorized by the superintendent and/or his or her designee(s) to ride the bus to and from any school activity.

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of his/her passengers, particularly for those who cross a roadway after leaving the bus. No bus driver will order or allow a student to disembark at other than his/her customary boarding or alighting place. Students will not be permitted to leave the bus except at their regular stop unless written permission to do otherwise is received by school officials. In order to assure the safety of all, the bus driver may hold students accountable for their conduct during the course of transportation and may recommend corrective action against a student. Bus drivers are expressly prohibited from using corporal punishment. Bus drivers are expressly prohibited from allowing anyone to board the bus who is not a student or a person authorized to ride the bus by the superintendent and/or his or her designee(s).

### **C. Emergencies**

In the event of an accident or other emergency, the bus driver will follow the emergency procedures in accordance with the School Bus Driver Handbook (SPI). A copy of the emergency procedures will be located in each bus. To insure the success of such emergency procedures, each bus driver will conduct an emergency evacuation drill within the first six weeks of each school semester. The district will conduct such other drills and procedures as may be necessary.

### **D. Student Conduct on Buses**

The superintendent will establish written rules of conduct for students riding school buses. Such rules will include as a minimum the requirements of WAC 392-145-021 and will be reviewed annually by the superintendent and revised if necessary. If the rules are substantially revised, a copy will be provided to the board for their information.

At the beginning of each school year, a copy of the rules of conduct for students riding buses will be provided to each student who is scheduled to ride a school bus. The classroom teacher and/or bus driver will review the rules with the students at or near the beginning of each school year. A copy of the rules will be available upon request at the district office.

**E. Safe Routes To School Plan**

Pursuant to WAC 392-151-025, all elementary schools that have students who walk to and from school are required to develop a suggested route plan. All schools are encouraged to have a walking/biking route plan in place. To develop the school walking/biking route plans, the superintendent will establish a Safe Routes to School committee.

The committee will conduct a walking and biking audit within a one mile radius of the school and develop a Safe Routes To School walking/biking map or plan. The plan will recommend the best routes for students walking to and from school, as well as the best routes to and from school bus stops. In developing the plan, the committee will consider, at a minimum, the following:

- 1) traffic patterns;
- 2) existing traffic controls;
- 3) existing school patrols;
- 4) limits on the number of school crossings so that students have to move through the crossings in groups;
- 5) allowing only one entrance-exit from each block to and from school;
- 6) routes that provide the greatest physical separation between walking children and traffic;
- 7) routes that expose students to the lowest speeds and volumes of moving vehicles;  
and
- 8) routes that include the fewest number of road or rail crossings;

The superintendent or designee will review the plan with the Safety Advisory Committee and, upon its approval, distribute the plan to all students with instructions that it be taken home and discussed with parents. The plan will be routinely updated as conditions change. The superintendent or designee will include the plan in the district's School Wellness Plan to encourage parents and students who walk and bike to school to use the recommended routes.

Cross References: 3241 – Classroom Management, Corrective Actions Or Punishment  
6700 – Nutrition and Physical Fitness

Legal References: RCW 28A.600.010 Enforcement of rules of conduct — Due process guarantees — Computation of days for short-term and long-term suspensions  
RCW 46.61.385 – School patrol – Appointment – Authority – Finance—

Insurance

WAC 392-144 School Bus Driver Qualifications

WAC 392-145-016 Rules for students riding school buses

WAC 392-145-021 General operating requirements

WAC 392-151-017 Safety advisory committee - Selection

WAC 392-151-025 Route plans.

WAC 392-400-225 School district rules defining misconduct —  
Distribution of rules

Management Resources:    *Policy & Legal News*, June 2014  
                                  The SRTS National Partnership Local Policy Guide

**Adoption Date: 11.04.14  
Washougal School District**

## **Student Safety Walking, Biking and Riding Buses to School**

### **Student Conduct on Buses**

Any misconduct by a student, which in the opinion of the bus driver or bus supervisor, is detrimental to the safe operation of the bus will be sufficient cause for the principal to suspend the transportation privilege.

Rules of conduct for students riding buses:

- 1) Students will obey the driver and any aide assigned to the bus by the district. The driver is in full charge of the bus and passengers and will be obeyed. If an aide is assigned to the bus by the district, he/she will be responsible for the safe operation of the bus. When transporting classes or teams, the teacher or coach will be primarily responsible for the behavior of the students. Students will obey both the driver and the teacher, coach or other staff member.
- 2) Students will ride only on their assigned bus unless written permission to do otherwise has been received by school officials.
- 3) Students will not be permitted to leave the bus except at their regular stop unless written permission to do otherwise is received by school officials.
- 4) Students assigned seats will use only that seat unless permission to change is authorized by the driver.
- 5) Students will observe rules of classroom conduct while riding on buses. Noise will be kept down to avoid distracting the driver. Students will refrain from the use of obscene language or gestures.
- 6) Students will not smoke or ignite lighters or matches on buses.
- 7) Students will not eat on buses, except when specifically authorized and supervised by and accompanying teacher, coach or other staff member. Buses will be kept clean.
- 8) Students will not open bus windows without the driver's permission.
- 9) Students will not extend any part of their body out of bus windows at any time.
- 10) Students will not carry or have in their possession items that can cause injury to passengers on the bus. Such items include, but are not limited to, sticks, breakable containers, weapons or firearms, straps or pins protruding from clothing, large, bulky items which cannot be held or placed between legs, etc. Books and personal belongings will be kept out of aisles.
- 11) Students will not have animals on buses, except a service animal providing assistance to a student with a disability.
- 12) Students will not sit in the driver's seat or to the immediate right or left of the driver.

- 13) Students will refrain from talking to the driver unless necessary.
- 14) Students will go directly to a seat once inside the bus and remain seated at all times unless the driver instructs otherwise.
- 15) Students will get on/off the bus in an orderly manner and will obey the instructions of the driver or school safety patrolmen on duty. There will be no pushing and shoving when boarding or leaving the bus. Once off the bus, students will adhere to rules for pedestrians.
- 16) Students will never cross the roadway behind a bus unless they use pedestrian crosswalks or traffic lights.
- 17) Students will stand away from the roadway curb when any bus is approaching or leaving a stop.
- 18) Students going to and from their bus stops where there are no sidewalks will walk on the left-hand side of the roadway facing oncoming traffic. Students will go directly to their home after leaving the bus.
- 19) Students will use lap belts on buses when available.
- 20) Students will follow emergency exit drill procedures as prescribed by the driver.
- 21) Students will not tamper with emergency doors or equipment.
- 22) Students will remain quietly seated, not exhibit disruptive behavior and turn off all noise-making devices at highway rail grade crossings.
- 23) Parents of students identified as causing damage to buses will be charged with the cost of the incurred damage. Students causing the damage may be suspended from transportation.
- 24) Student misconduct will constitute sufficient reason for suspending transportation privileges.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Principals are responsible for correcting students whose abusive behavior results in a bus-incident report or violates the rules above. The principal, or his/her designee, will provide supervision during bus arrival and departure times and receive reports (written and oral) from the drivers.

The principal will insure that students comply with the specified regulations. Principals will maintain open lines of communication among school officials, bus drivers and the transportation department.

When waiting for a bus, or going to and from a bus stop, students are responsible for conducting themselves according to the social and legal mores that apply to adults in public. That is, they must not abuse or cause damage to private or public property; they must not use obscene

language or gestures; they must not engage in criminal activity. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in formal complaints by citizens which may be forwarded to principals for possible corrective action.

Students provided with transportation are responsible for complying with the district's rules of conduct for students riding buses. Failure to adhere to these rules or abusive behavior towards the public, driver, fellow passengers or the vehicle constitutes justification for initiating corrective action against a student.

Abusive behavior on the part of a student riding a bus may result in a written report when, in the opinion of the driver or bus supervisor, there has been an infraction of the rules applicable to student conduct. The written report is the primary means by which a driver or bus supervisor communicates a student's conduct to the school and transportation department. This report, in most cases, reflects an infraction of rules which is repeated by the student after his/her having received previous oral warnings from the driver or bus supervisor. In order for drivers and bus supervisors to effectively maintain control on their buses, it is expected that action be exercised by principals when receiving such a report.

When a student's conduct constitutes an infraction of the rules, the driver or bus supervisor will complete a report on the student describing the incident or damage that occurred. The driver or bus supervisor will provide the student with a copy of the report, with the expectation that the child gives the copy to his/her parent/guardian. The driver or bus supervisor will hand the original report to the principal and submit a copy to the transportation supervisor. The copy of the report concerning students receiving special education services will be given to the principal for disposition.

The principal upon receiving the report will investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and take action according to the procedures set forth in the district's policies pertaining to corrective action. When investigating the incident, the primary concern must be with respect to the safe transport of students. Corrective action, if necessary, should be consistent throughout the district as follows:

- A. Warning:** When a student's misconduct is of a minor nature which does not jeopardize the safety or welfare of other students or the operation of the bus. The driver will remind the student of the rule or behavior they need to work on, and the expectations that have been taught. Drivers may assign seats or move students to support their safety on the bus. From the school administrator, students may receive minor consequences such as loss of recess or break period or detention. Administrators may review the student's behavior expectations on the bus.
- B. Suspension:** When a student's misconduct is deemed to jeopardize the safety of bus passengers and operation, or when repeated warning notices fail to correct abusive behavior, or when a student incurs damage to the bus.
- C. Expulsion:** When a student's misconduct is of such nature that the safety of the bus operation and/or of the occupants was willfully and seriously threatened (i.e., e.g. student assaulting the driver).

The action taken by the principal will be annotated on the report and forwarded to the student's parent/guardian for signature. The transportation department will be notified.

Drivers will be advised to file assault and battery charges against students who physically assault them. Under no circumstances will the driver retaliate in kind and physically assault the student as this conduct may subject him/her to legal action.

The student or parent of a student who has been suspended from receiving transportation entitlements may appeal the principal's decision by submitting a written statement to the superintendent. The superintendent or designee will render a decision after evaluating the issues and facts involved.

### **Emergencies**

The transportation supervisor will review the contents of the School Bus Driver's Handbook with each driver and substitute driver prior to the beginning of each school year. Each driver and substitute driver, in turn, will follow the procedure as outlined in the handbook. At the start of each field trip or extracurricular trip, the school bus driver will review with all passengers the location and use of the emergency exits, emergency equipment and any district emergency procedures.

In the event of a collision, the driver will make contact with the transportation supervisor who will:

- A. Determine the nature of the collision;
- B. Contact emergency services if there is reason to believe that there are injuries which require immediate attention;
- C. Contact the state patrol regarding the accident;
- D. Advise the superintendent of schools;
- E. Investigate the collision and gather the names of all students and witnesses;
- F. Dispatch another bus to transport the student to their destination; and
- G. Contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of any students who are injured.

To facilitate the responsibilities assigned to the transportation department, the supervisor, in cooperation with the building principals, will compile a list of students, including addresses and phone numbers that are authorized to ride each bus route.