

# ***Bus Rider's Safety Handbook***



**Working together to make a difference**

## **BUS RIDER'S SAFETY HANDBOOK**

The Goal of this Bus Rider's handbook is to help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for our children who ride the bus.

The school district is in need of your help and cooperation. It is important that every student understand the standards outlined in this handbook and be encouraged by his or her parents or guardians to follow the rules and regulations. Please read and discuss this handbook with your child(ren).

Video surveillance may be in operation on your child's bus to help in maintaining a safe and orderly bus environment. Federal law prohibits the school district from releasing the video to any member of the public except to law enforcement officials (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

All Ponder ISD Campus and Transportation policies and rules are enforceable within 300 feet of any Ponder ISD bus stop or campus.

### **RIDER ELIGIBILITY**

1. All riders shall be registered at their campus office.
2. The Board, after determining eligibility for transportation services, shall allow a parent to designate a child-care facility or the residence of a grandparent of the child instead of the child's residence as the regular location for purposes of obtaining transportation under the system to and from the child's school. Either designated location must be an approved stop on an approved route. CNA (LEGAL).
3. All students who use District transportation shall board buses at authorized stops. Authorized bus stops shall be designated annually by the Superintendent or designee. Bus drivers shall load and unload passengers only at authorized stops. CNA (LOCAL).
4. Visiting riders are not eligible to ride the bus due to seating charts and capacity.

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

Students are not allowed to bring animals or harmful objects on the bus (i.e. weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, laser lights, flammables, etc.) Band instruments or class projects are allowed ONLY if they can be held in students' lap and not extend above chin level.

### **ACCIDENTS OR EMERGENCIES**

1. Follow the driver's directions.
2. If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.
3. The following procedures will be used in an emergency situation.
  - Students will stay seated and wait for driver's instructions.
  - Leave the bus in a single file as quickly as possible.
  - Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
  - Once outside the bus, follow the driver's direction completely.
  - Students may not leave scene of the accident until the police officer clears the area.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS**

1. Bus rider rules apply to all school sponsored events.
2. Discipline will be the responsibility of the building principal and the trip sponsor.
3. The bus must return clean when returning from the trip.
4. Students leaving with a parent or guardian must sign-out on the Ponder ISD release form.
  - Before leaving a contest the student must make contact with their respective coach./sponsor
  - A parent or guardian must sign the student out prior to leaving the contest.

### **PROCEDURES FOR WAITING FOR THE BUS**

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes before time.
2. Students are required to wait a minimum of 20 feet from the edge of the roadway, in an orderly group, and remain there until the bus has come to a complete stop before loading.
3. Students shall move well away from the side of the bus after leaving the bus.
4. Students are not to rush the bus.
5. Students are not to get the mail from the roadside mailbox until the bus has departed.

6. Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
7. Parents/guardians should instruct their children on what procedures to follow if the bus is missed.

### **LOADING THE BUS**

1. Scuffling, shoving, hitting or fighting is prohibited on the bus and at designated bus stops. Student must keep all body parts and personal objects from contacting another student.
2. When the bus approaches, form a line (smallest to largest) and be prepared to load immediately.
3. Use handrail and steps.
4. Go directly to your seat and sit down. The bus will not move until all students are properly seated.

### **SEATING ON THE BUS**

1. All students shall be assigned a specific seat on the bus.
2. Students will be assigned seating from front to back with the younger students being seated closest to the driver.
3. The driver will use seating assignments as a form of student management.
4. Upon parent request siblings may be asked to sit together. (Older student will move forward).

### **CONDUCT ON THE BUS**

1. Follow the directions of the driver.
2. Stay in your seat and face the front: students will remain properly seated (*facing forward keeping feet on the floor in front of them*) at all times and not block the center aisle. All students will remain inside their seat compartment at all times
3. Keep all body parts and objects inside the bus.
4. Items shall remain in student backpacks at all times.
5. Students will leave the bus only at their assigned stops. Students will remain seated in assigned seats at all times unless exiting the bus.
6. No scuffling, pushing, pinching, or fighting.
7. No littering or throwing objects.
8. No food, drink, or tobacco products are to be consumed on the bus. During extreme heat, drivers may allow students to consume water only.
9. No spitting.
10. Throwing objects off the bus or out the window will result in suspension of riding privileges.
11. No yelling, inappropriate language or gestures on the bus. Students are not to engage in loud talking, yelling, using profanity, abusive or inappropriate language, displaying obscene gestures or gang signs. The driver may require any or all students to be silent on the bus.
12. Do not damage or deface the bus. Students shall not deface or vandalize the bus or related equipment. Students who violate this rule will be required to pay for damages.
13. Students shall comply with the Ponder ISD dress code on all buses.
14. Students who damage property or misbehave in such a manner that the safety and welfare of others is jeopardized, may be subject to being suspended or expelled from school, plus they must pay any damages. Disruption of transportation ED. CODE 37.126 can result in a \$500.00 fine.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Bus Discipline Procedures: ***RIDING A SCHOOL BUS THAT SERVES THIS DISTRICT IS A PRIVILEGE.*** The driver is recognized as the authority on the bus and has control over daily operations. Cooperation of every rider is necessary for the safety and comfort of all.

1. The Assistant Principal of each campus shall be responsible for enforcing discipline on all buses. All transportation personnel are authorized to ensure that department and district discipline management guidelines are followed.
2. The Assistant Principal or designee will investigate a violation and contact parents by phone, mail or safety notice if their child is involved in inappropriate behavior. If consequences dictate a suspension, the parent/guardian will be notified by phone or home delivery of the suspension dates.
3. Misconduct will be reported by the driver to the Assistant Principal or designee using a Bus Safety Report. Copies of the Bus Safety Reports will be sent to the parent, building principal and placed on file at the Transportation Department Office.

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** The student may be subject to disciplinary action, and written notice will be sent to the parent. The notice will inform the parent that if a second offense is committed, the student will be excluded from riding the bus for a minimum 5 school days. **For severe behavior problems, a student may be suspended from the bus immediately for the number of days determined appropriate by the principal.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** A notice will be sent to the parent advising that the child is excluded from riding the bus for 5 days. The student may be subject to other disciplinary action.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** The student will be excluded from riding the bus for a period of 10 school days. The student will be subject to other disciplinary action.

**4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** The student will be excluded from the bus for the remainder of the semester. The student will be subject to other disciplinary action. Prior to the student being re-admitted to the bus in the next semester, the parent must contact the principal and give concrete assurance that the student's behavior will conform to rules and regulations.

### **DISCIPLINE REFERRAL PROCESS**

The bus driver, Director of Transportation and campus assistant principals are each responsible for portions of progressive discipline aimed at correcting inappropriate student behavior occurring on buses. The progression of discipline is as follows:

**Verbal Counseling:** Drivers constantly monitor the behavior of their passengers and as such regularly provide oral guidance and reminders of appropriate behavior and applicable rules. This counseling may be accompanied by additional on bus consequences such as temporary seat assignments. Where minor infractions are not corrected or notable infractions occur, the driver will follow up the verbal counseling with documentation on the student's informal transportation discipline record. The date, behavior and discipline shall be recorded.

**Written Referral:** Where a significant misconduct occurs or continued documented verbal counseling has not been affective; the driver may initiate a written referral. The student will be told that a written referral is being submitted to the Director of Transportation. Upon receipt of a written referral, the Director of Transportation will obtain the necessary feedback from the driver of the bus. The Director of Transportation will then notify the assistant principal or designee who will investigate the violation. The investigation process is subject to include:

- Current referral piece
- Bus Driver communication
- Transportation Director communication
- Student's involved in the infraction and their role in the infraction.
- Student who witnessed the infraction
- Prior bus referral history that has been reported
- Prior disciplinary history

**Suspension of Bus Privilege:** After the parent/guardian has been notified of a first written referral and possibility of bus suspension, any subsequent written referrals may result in the suspension of bus privilege. Once the assistant principal or designee has investigated the referral and determined that suspension is warranted, the parent/guardian will be notified that the suspension will start the next school day. The first suspension will be a minimum of five days. The student may be subject to other disciplinary action.

**Appeal Process:** The student or parent of a student who has been suspended from receiving transportation entitlement may appeal a decision by submitting a formal written request to the respective administrator. Refer to FNG (LOCAL) for more information.