

SCHOOL BUS CODE OF CONDUCT GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

Riding the school bus is considered an extension of the school day, and as such, the Consortium follows the Safe Schools Act and Regulations, as well as the **Ontario School Code of Conduct**. These guidelines ensure that civility, respect, responsibility, and accountability are maintained by students while on the bus.

It is important to note that, according to the Ministry of Education, school bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. This means that access to transportation can be revoked if students or parents/guardians fail to comply with the rules and expectations set forth by the Consortium and the school board.

We recognize that each situation is unique and carefully consider any mitigating circumstances. However, the guidelines we follow provide a framework for handling common issues that may arise during school transportation to ensure the safety and well-being of all students at all times.

BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY

Students who have the opportunity to ride school buses may do so as long as they behave in a manner that is reasonable and safe. Unacceptable behaviour can result in loss of bus privilege.

The school board and consortium are jointly responsible for ensuring the safety of students on the bus. If a student engages in inappropriate behaviour, the school Principal and/or Vice Principal will work closely with the Consortium to determine appropriate consequences. This includes decisions about possible suspension of bus privileges and reinstatement, if necessary.

If a bus suspension is issued, it applies to all buses the student uses, both in the morning and afternoon.

The bus driver shall report any concerns/incidents that might result in a decision involving the removal of transportation privileges to the Principal or Vice-Principal via the online reporting tool on the consortium's operator platform. The school will receive the information in their school portal for further action.

NOTE: As stated in the **Ontario School Code of Conduct** the bus is an extension of the school day. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats, and will do so in collaboration with the principal. School Board policies will be strictly enforced on the school bus in the same way they are enforced within the respective school. Finally, to ensure ongoing communication between the bus driver, transportation provider, Consortium and the school, all removal of transportation privileges shall be coordinated by the Principal or Vice-Principal and communicated to the Consortium.

PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF VIDEO CAMERAS ON SCHOOL BUSES

The Transportation Policies of the four (4) partner school boards of the Sudbury Student Services Consortium provide for the use of video cameras on school buses that are experiencing discipline problems. Video surveillance on school buses is used to promote the safety of students. In the event of a reported or observed incident, the review of recorded information may be used to assist in the investigation of the incident. The records created while delivering a video surveillance program are under the Consortium's control and are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS – JK to Grade 12

The following behaviour expectations outlined for students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 serve as general guidelines to promote safety and respect on school buses. Given that each situation is unique, school Principals, Vice Principals, and the Consortium will carefully consider the specific circumstances and context of each case before determining any consequences. This collaborative approach ensures that appropriate actions are taken based on the individual needs and behaviours of the student involved.

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour while riding the school bus which violate the **Ontario School Code of Conduct**:

Unacceptable Behaviour Impacting Rider Safety Violating the Code of Conduct:

- **Eating or Drinking on the Bus:** Consuming food or beverages can create messes, pose choking hazards, and trigger allergic reactions.
- **Blocking of Aisles:** Keeping the aisles clear is essential for safety. Students are required to sit with their backs against the seat and their feet in front of them at all times to maintain proper safety and compartmentalization. Students must ensure they are not blocking the aisles with backpacks, feet, or any other objects.
- **Leaving Seat/Standing While the Bus is in Motion:** Students must remain seated with seat belts fastened (if available) to ensure safety while the bus is moving.
- **Excessive Horseplay:** Rough or overly playful behavior may cause injuries or disturb other passengers.
- **Running or Pushing at the Bus Stop:** While parents are responsible for supervising student behavior at bus stops, students who engage in unsafe or unruly behavior that impacts the safety of others or the operation of the school bus may face disciplinary actions related to their transportation privileges.
- **Hanging Out of the Window:** Leaning out or placing any part of the body outside the bus window poses significant danger.
- **Putting Hand Out of the Bus Window and/or Touching Bus Equipment (Emergency Door Handle, etc.):** Hands and objects must remain inside the bus, and emergency equipment should only be used during an actual emergency.
- **Holding Onto or Attempting to Hold Onto Any Portion of the Exterior of the Bus:** Grabbing or holding onto the outside of the bus while it's moving is extremely dangerous.
- **Throwing or Shooting Any Object:** Throwing or launching objects inside the bus or out of windows can harm others or cause distractions that jeopardize safety.
- **Unauthorized Entering or Leaving the Bus Through Emergency Door/Tampering with Bus Equipment:** The emergency door and other safety equipment should only be used during actual emergencies and should not be tampered with.
- **Use of Any Type of Guns, Including Play Guns & Laser Pointers:** Using objects like squirt guns, airsoft guns, or laser pointers can be dangerous and disruptive.
- **Lighting Matches, Vapes, Lighters, Fireworks, or Any Flammable Object or Substance:** Using any form of fire or flammable material on the bus creates a major safety hazard.
- **Riding an Unassigned Bus Without Permission or Using an Unassigned Bus Stop:** Students must only ride their assigned bus and use the correct bus stop unless they have special permission.
- **Riding or Attempting to Ride Any Bus After Receiving a Suspension:** Students who are suspended from the bus and still try to ride are in violation of their suspension terms, which may lead to further consequences.

Generally Unacceptable Behaviour Violating the Code of Conduct:

- **Spitting:** Spitting on the bus, whether on the floor or at others, is unhygienic and inappropriate.
- **Excessive Noise:** Making loud noises distracts the driver, compromising their ability to focus on the road and ensure the safety of everyone on board.
- **Profanity, Obscene Gestures, or Possession of Unacceptable Material:** Swearing, using offensive language, making inappropriate gestures, or possessing objectionable materials disrupts the respectful and safe environment required on the bus.
- **Lack of Respect for Others on the Bus:** Disrespectful actions, such as harassing or intimidating other students, undermine the sense of safety and inclusion necessary for all passengers.
- **Disobeying the Driver and/or Monitor:** Ignoring instructions from the driver or monitor puts everyone's safety at risk, as these rules are in place to maintain order and prevent accidents.
- **Physical and/or Verbal Aggression Against Any Person (Including Racial Slurs):** Acts of physical violence or verbal abuse, including racist or offensive comments, harm others, create a hostile environment, and jeopardize the safety and emotional well-being of passengers.
- **Swearing at a Teacher or Another Person in a Position of Authority (School Bus Driver or Monitor):** Using profanity or verbally abusing a school bus driver, who is in a position of authority, is treated as a serious violation of respect and authority.
- **Uttering a Threat to Inflict Serious Bodily Harm on Another Person:** Verbal threats to harm others are taken seriously because they create fear, disrupt safety, and may require intervention from other authorities to ensure the well-being of passengers.
- **Possession of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs:** Bringing alcohol or illegal substances onto the bus violates laws and school policies, creating a dangerous environment for everyone and may have legal consequences.
- **Being Under the Influence of Alcohol:** Boarding the bus under the influence of alcohol compromises the safety and behavior of the individual and those around them.
- **Committing an Act of Vandalism That Causes Extensive Damage to School Property (Extends to the School Bus):** Damaging the bus in any way is considered vandalism. The student, parent, or guardian will be held responsible for paying for the repairs, and police may be contacted. Reinstatement of school bus privileges may only occur after full payment is made for the damage.
- **Bullying:** Bullying, whether verbal, physical, or emotional, intimidates and harms others, creating a hostile environment that is detrimental to the safety and well-being of all passengers.
- **Engaging in Another Activity That, Under a Policy of the Board, Requires Suspension:** Any other actions deemed by the school board as grounds for mandatory suspension will apply. This includes any serious misbehavior that threatens the safety or well-being of others on the bus.
- **Other Offences Reported by the Driver or Principal:** Any other behaviors reported by the driver or school staff that threaten safety, order, or the well-being of passengers will result in appropriate disciplinary action.
- **Offences Committed on Any Bus Outside Regular School Transportation (Field Trips, Shuttles, etc.):** Infractions apply not just to daily bus rides, but also on field trips and shuttle services.

Additional offences and examples of inappropriate behaviour are outlined in the **Ontario School Code of Conduct**, guided by the *Safe Schools Act, 2012 (Bill 13)* and supported by *Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 128 - Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct, 2024*. All individual school's code of conduct will also apply.

Inappropriate behaviour by parents or guardians in or around school buses will not be tolerated and may result in the suspension of their child's bus privileges. School principals and vice principals will work with the Consortium to assess the situation and determine appropriate consequences.