



## TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT



## SCHOOL BUS INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

**WELCOME** to the Stevenson Carson School District. This handbook was prepared by the Stevenson Carson School District Transportation Department to provide useful information to families and students. It includes information about student conduct, school bus rules, emergency evacuation procedures, bus passes, parent-driver communication and other important information. We enjoy working with the district's children, and we look forward to making their daily bus ride a safe and pleasant experience. You can reach the Transportation Department by calling 509-427-5277.

## **TRANSPORTATION STAFF**

Director of Transportation	Sandra Karppinen
Dispatcher/Secretary	Dan McKee
Driver Trainer	Jole Wolk
Driver Trainer	Colleen Garwood

## **BUS CONDUCT**

The goal of Transportation Services is to provide safe and timely bus service for the District's students. To do this, drivers must be able to concentrate on operating vehicles in a variety of traffic conditions, always being alert and vigilant. Excessive noise or misconduct by bus passengers can distract a driver and endanger all students on the bus. Therefore, the support and cooperation of families and students is needed to ensure acceptable behavior by all bus riders.

Students are expected to cooperate with their bus driver to promote bus safety. Each driver is given some latitude working with students to modify inappropriate behaviors. A bus referral may be written at any time during this process. A driver may confer with a student, change bus seating, assign a specific seat, reinforce student's successes and establish consequences for inappropriate bus rider behavior. If violations of Bus Riding Rules continue, after the above consequences have been issued a written referral may be issued. For severe or hazardous conduct, a referral or bus suspension may be immediate.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES**

Any misconduct by a student which, in the opinion of the bus driver or the director or transportation/designee is detrimental to the safe operations of the bus, shall be sufficient cause for the director of transportation/designee to suspend transportation privileges.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

The Director of Transportation/designee, in conjunction with the building principal, is responsible for correcting those students whose unacceptable behavior results in a bus incident report or violation of the above rules. The principal shall aid in enforcing that students comply with the specified regulations. Open lines of communication among school officials, bus drivers the transportation department, and families must be maintained.

- Suspension may begin at the end of the school day during which the misconduct occurred. In other words, the student transported to school will be returned to their regular stop.
- If a student is suspended for misconduct on either a morning or afternoon bus, the suspension will apply to ALL buses. (This may include field trip buses and extracurricular activities buses.) If a student's behavior constitutes an assigned seat that assignment will apply to ALL buses.
- At any bus referral level, a conference may occur involving Principal, student, transportation, and guardian.
- Parents/guardians will be advised of dates of suspension by mail, telephone, or school administration.

## **APPEAL PROCEDURES**

Students and/or parents/guardians of student(s) who wish to appeal a suspension may submit a request to the Director of Transportation for an informal conference as set forth in WAC 392-400-240

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS**

Every child who rides a school bus should know what to do should it ever become necessary to evacuate the bus quickly and safely. Usually students remain on the bus during an emergency; however, two situations do require the bus to be evacuated:

1. **FIRE OR DANGER OF FIRE:** a bus should be stopped and evacuated immediately if the engine or any portion of the bus is on fire. Passengers should move a distance of 100 feet or more from the bus and remain there until the driver of the bus has determined that no danger remains. Being near an existing fire and unable to move the bus away, or near the presence of gasoline or other combustible materials should be considered as danger of fire and students should be evacuated.
2. **UNSAFE POSITION:** in the event a bus is stopped due to accident, mechanical failure, or road conditions, it must be determined, immediately, whether it is safe for passengers to remain in the bus or to evacuate.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL**

In compliance with WAC 392-145-080, an emergency evacuation drill will be completed within the first six weeks of each school semester for all students riding school buses except those excused by the regulation. Students excused from the drill will be orally instructed three times per year. Drills will be held at school bus loading zones only. Students riding field trip buses and extra-curricular buses will receive verbal reviews of emergency procedures at the beginning of each trip.

THE EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL WILL PROCEED AS FOLLOWS. THE DRIVER WILL:

- Provide a short explanation of why it is necessary to conduct exit drills.
- Shut off the motor, set the emergency brake, and place the bus in Park or Neutral depending on the bus type.
- Instruct reliable students about the use of the 2-way radio.
- Put the microphone outside the window and turn key to accessory, if needed/possible.
- Instruct students on getting emergency help.
- Instruct students on setting highway warning reflector devices
- Instruct students on removing the first-aid kit.
- Instruct students on use of the fire extinguisher and its location
- Instruct and assign students to open Exit door(s)
- Explain which windows are “kick out” windows.
- Assist students in leaving via the exit door(s)

**Students should also be taught to remember that most accidents are preventable, regardless of who may be at fault, and that proper behavior and appropriate conduct on the bus is the best way to assist the driver in the safe performance of his/her duties.**

## **STUDENT BUS PASSES**

**Bus passes are required for students who wish to depart the bus at a different authorized stop or to ride a different bus to or from school other than their assigned bus for grades K-6.**

Bus Passes for riding a bus other than a student’s regular bus are issued on a space available basis only. Therefore, there is no guarantee that a pass will be approved. Schools issue bus passes. The procedure to obtain a bus pass requires a parent note. The school’s office processes the request and issues either a Permanent or Temporary Bus Pass. No bus passes are issued the first two weeks of school or the last two weeks of school except in emergencies.

## **PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN**

The standard Stevenson Carson School District Transportation procedure is that Preschool/Kindergarten students being transported by bus have a responsible person to receive them at their bus stop. If the parents/guardian believe that the person they wish to receive their child from the bus stop is responsible but is under the age of 18, the District then requires that information to be in writing from the parents/guardian via a form provided by Transportation. **IF THERE IS NO RELEASE AND NO PARENT AT THE BUS STOP, STUDENT IS RETURNED TO THE TRANSPORTATION OR DISTRICT OFFICE.** Kindergarten students are to sit in the first few rows of the school bus and never behind the first exit door of any school bus even if they have older siblings on the bus. The older siblings can sit up in the front with the Kindergarten student if they wish to sit together.

## **GUARDIANS RIDING BUSES**

Only students and staff of the Stevenson Carson School District are allowed to ride the school bus. However, parents or guardians of Stevenson Carson District Students may occasionally be given permission to ride the bus to/from school if they are assisting in a classroom. Permission must be pre-approved through Transportation or the school office. The school will then issue a bus pass to the parent. To ride a school bus for any other reason, approval must come from the Transportation Department or Superintendent's office.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION WITH THE BUS DRIVER**

Due to safety reasons and time challenges, boarding a school bus to talk to the bus driver or a student is prohibited. It is best to contact the bus driver through the Transportation Department. This will ensure that the driver has adequate time to discuss your needs and concerns. Clarification of the rules and procedures should be directed to the Director of Transportation.

## **CAMERAS**

The district and bus driver's goal is to increase safety while transporting students to and from school. Cameras on the bus maybe used as a tool to help improve student conduct.

## **MECHANICALLY SAFE BUSES**

Stevenson Carson School District buses are inspected by the Washington State Patrol twice per year. All district vehicles that transport students meet or exceed Federal and State specifications. All school bus drivers participate in FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) random drug screenings and monthly skill enhancement classes.

## **BUS DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM**

To ensure a safe bus ride for your students, each bus driver is an authorized Washington State School Bus Driver who has completed an extensive training program consisting of classroom and on the road training. Each driver has completed a drug screen and has undergone an extensive background check, including State and Federal fingerprinting clearance.

## **FACTS TO LEARN AND SHARE**

- The National Academy of Sciences, the U.S. Department of Transportation and other authorities agree that school buses are the safest form of transportation for getting children to and from school.
- Some 480,000 school buses carry 26 million children- more than half of America's School children-each day, rarely with any serious accident.
- Safety features including the color and size of the school buses, height, reinforced sides, cross view mirrors, flashing red lights, crossing arms and stop sign ensure children are protected and secure on and off the bus.
- School bus drivers are highly trained professionals who have your child's safety in mind. They receive specialized training in student behavior management. Loading and unloading, security and emergency medical procedures.
- Drivers participate in pre-employment and random drug/alcohol testing, as well as frequent driving record checks, and submit to background checks and periodic medical exams to keep their commercial driver's license (CDL) with a School Bus Endorsement.
- The school bus industry operates by a set of safety, security, health and driver qualification guidelines that meet, and in some cases exceed, federal and state laws, and ensure that school buses are the safest mode of transportation for our nation's schoolchildren.

### **School Bus Safety Tips**

#### **For Students:**

- Be alert to traffic. Check both ways for cars before stepping off the bus.
- Make eye contact with the bus driver and wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the street.

- Walk in front of the bus: never walk behind the bus to cross the street.
- While waiting for the bus, stay in a safe place away from the street.
- Before leaving the sidewalk, look for the flashing red lights.
- Never go near or under the bus to retrieve something you have dropped.

**For Guardians:**

- Have your child ride the school bus to and from school instead of driving or riding with teenage drivers.
- Review the safety tips with your child regularly.
- Get to know the parents of other riders. You will learn about the other children who are riding along with your child.
- Team up with other parents to get involved and monitor bus stops and bus routes. Voice concerns immediately to your school district.
- Get to know your schools' transportation coordinator and your child's bus driver. He or she is a trained professional who sees your child every day.
- Keep phone numbers handy in case the bus is delayed or in the event of an emergency.