

# **SOUTHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **District 500**



### **RIDING A SCHOOL BUS IS A PRIVILEGE NOT A RIGHT**

A student's riding privileges may be revoked for failing to obey the school district's policy and guidelines.

### **POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

### **FOR TRANSPORTING PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC STUDENTS**

## TRANSPORTATION RULES AND GUIDELINES

Dear Parents/Responsible Person:

The administration and bus operators of District 500 believe that all those involved in riding the bus should understand and abide by the rules that have been adopted for safety purposes. The following rules and guidelines are the bus behavior responsibilities for all people concerned with busing in District 500. It is necessary that all parents, guardians and students involved in riding the bus read this information carefully and keep this transportation guide readily available for reference. We solicit the cooperation of everyone concerned in providing safe transportation of students to and from school. We also welcome your comments with regard to transportation matters. Our goal for district transportation is an efficient operation with the highest concern for safety in transporting students to and from school.

If you have questions or concerns, first contact your bus driver. Otherwise contact the building principal or the district office.

K-12 Office	(507)582-3568
District Office	(507)582-3283
Transportation Coordinator	(507)857-1100

1. All students to be transported by bus in School District 500 will board buses at designated points which may be located as much as ½ mile from the road entrance to the property of residence or at designated pick up points.
2. Designated pick up points are:
  - Taopi- Park
  - Dexter- on the east side of the Methodist Church on Pine St.
  - Elkton- N School St. in front of the old school
  - Lyle area- 12290 570<sup>th</sup> Ave. Lyle, MN
  - I-90 and Hwy 56 area- SMEC parking lot: 21697 State Hwy 56 Austin, MN
  - Adams- south side of the HS/MS on Water St.
  - Rose Creek- Licensed Daycares for bus routes & 106 Main St. SE for activity buses
3. Bus routes and shuttles are established to be as quick and efficient as possible. Families are requested to be prompt. Being late impacts all the other families. Drivers cannot put a bus in jeopardy to convenience a few. Drivers have to consider the welfare of all students.
4. Special conditions may exist on occasion (inclement weather or road conditions) which warrants extra care by drivers. At these times drivers, are expected to use good judgement in delivering students to their homes. There are times when a bus may not be able to travel certain roads to pick up a student. Parents will need to deliver the child to the bus, to the school or keep the child home.
5. The District will attempt to accommodate requests for alternate drop off points if it is on an already existing route and the change would not create a bus overload. A note of request must be provided to the District.
6. School bus laws require the use of stop arms and flashing red lights whenever students are dropped off and picked up in a roadway. Stop arms and flashing red lights mean that vehicles must stop and wait at least 20 feet from the bus, whether they are following a bus or approaching from the opposite direction.
7. School buses do not drive on private driveways except as a designated turnaround.

8. Special transportation is provided for students with special needs who cannot travel to and from school on the regular bus routes.
9. Students ride only on assigned buses. Students are not allowed to switch buses or bring another rider on their bus without prior authorization.
10. Large articles, large musical instruments, pets, firearms or other hazardous materials are not allowed on the bus.
11. Only pupils assigned to the school bus by the school district shall be transported at the district expense. In no case shall the number assigned exceed the bus capacity.
12. A transportation committee comprised of two bus drivers, one administrator, the transportation coordinator, and a school board member will be established to address any problems or concerns referred to the committee.
13. Any situation or problem that may arise not covered by this handbook will be decided by the principal(s) or district superintendent.



## CODE OF CONDUCT BUS BEHAVIOR RESPONSIBILITIES

**Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible directly to the driver of the bus.** Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with these policies. The driver of any school bus shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported. Problems between bus drivers and families should be resolved between themselves if possible. Bus drivers can request their meeting with parents be with the transportation committee.

### SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS:

1. Shall treat all students with dignity.
2. Are responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported.
3. Are responsible for reporting bus misconduct in writing to the student's school principal immediately.
4. May assign seats if necessary.
5. Depending on offense, issue verbal warning prior to issuing a bus slip.
6. Advise a student that a slip is being given to the principal.
7. Advise a student if unsafe behavior is observed and what safe behavior is.

### STUDENTS:

1. Treat all drivers with respect.
2. Report to assigned buses on time.
3. Ride only assigned buses. Extra riders such as friends are not allowed to ride your bus without parental permission.
4. Get on and off the bus at your appropriate stops.
5. Take seat promptly and remain seated.
6. **SIT DOWN, KEEP THE AISLES OPEN, AND FACE THE FRONT OF THE BUS.**
7. Keep head, arms and hands inside the bus.
8. No eating or drinking on the bus.
9. Refrain from shouting, fighting, spitting, teasing, shoving, pushing, throwing objects, using tobacco and chemicals, lighting matches and behaving in any other disruptive manner.

10. Stay back from the curb before boarding and after leaving the bus. Refrain from walking or running alongside of a moving bus. Refrain from hanging on to any part of a moving bus. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the driver to open the door and signal that it is safe to enter before proceeding to the bus.
11. When it is time to leave the bus, stay seated until the bus has completely stopped. Do not push or crowd to get off. Use the handrail when stepping off the bus.
12. Walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus when it is necessary to cross the road.
13. Objects that may be hazardous such as firearms, knives, etc. are not allowed on the bus.
14. Items that could cause driver distraction are not allowed on the bus. Electronic devices with headphones are allowed only if it does not disturb other students and/or the driver.
15. Stay in designated areas when changing buses. Behavior rules from the adult supervisor on duty apply to these designated areas well as on the bus.

#### PARENTS:

1. **If your child does not need morning transportation, please contact the bus driver earlier than 9:00 p.m. the evening before, or between 5:30-6:30 a.m. If it is after 6:30 a.m., please call the District Office and leave a message so the driver can be radioed.**
2. Encourage appropriate bus behavior. Go over this book and the safety rules with your child.
3. Make sure children are dressed appropriately for the season
4. Accept responsibility for your child's behavior.
5. Provide alternative transportation to and from school for students who have lost riding privileges.
6. Provide transportation for students needing to get large objects to school or home from school such as science projects and large musical instruments.
7. Are responsible for transportation if your child misses the bus.
8. Provide your child with a carrying bag or backpack. This reduces the chance of an item being dropped by the bus or being lost.
9. Keep in mind what a distraction and safety hazard it is when your own children act up in the back seat of a car. Good behavior is extremely important.

10. Constant communication with a driver creates a good working relationship between students, parents, and the driver.

## MISBEHAVIOR

#### TO THE PARENT/RESPONSIBLE PERSON:

All students in our school system who ride a school bus to and from school are subject to regulations as established by the school board.

Any misbehavior which distracts the driver is a very serious hazard to the safe operation of the bus and, as such, jeopardizes the safety of all passengers. Students who violate acceptable standards for safe riding could lose their privilege to ride the bus. In the following policy the decision of the bus driver is final and it will be reported in writing to the appropriate school administrator.

**Referral #1** – The bus driver will make a written report to the principal and an informal hearing will be held. If the student is found to be at fault, he/she will be informed of the remainder of the referral policy and written notice will be sent to the parents.

**Referral #2** – The bus driver will make a written report to the principal and an informal hearing will be held. If the student is found to be at fault, he/she will be suspended from riding any buses for a period of 1 to 5 days. The parents will be contacted and a conference will be held with the student and parents before bus privileges are restored.

**Referral #3** – The bus driver will make a written report to the principal. A formal hearing may be held before the transportation committee. If the student is found to be at fault, he/she can be suspended from all bus service for a period of more than five days or until the end of the school year. Furthermore, the School District also reserves the right to suspend students from bus service for the entire period of the student's enrollment.

However, referrals one and two may be waived by the district if the severity of the first violation is such that common sense dictates immediate suspension for any amount of time up to the balance of the school year for the safety of other students and/or a bus driver.

## EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

### HOW IS THE DECISION MADE TO CLOSE SCHOOL DUE TO BAD WEATHER?

Schools do not take the closing of school lightly. Safety of the children is given the highest priority, but that still does not make the decision a simple one. Not only is a day of learning missed, but also, it impacts working families as many have to arrange for alternative child care.

When the weather is bad, we have a process we use to determine whether to have school or not. The process begins with administrators driving roads at about 5:00 a.m. We try to make a decision before 6:00 a.m. in order for buses to begin their routes on time. Therefore, the decision to close is based on weather conditions at 6:00 a.m., unless we delay the start of school. Often we will delay the start of school which allows us to see if conditions will change. Weather conditions can look worse in the dark than they do in daylight. In general, we can then get a better idea about what the weather might be for the day.

If roads are good, it is difficult to justify closing school. Sometimes extreme cold weather may create a need to close. If it is so cold that we can't get buses running or have a problem keeping buildings warm, we will probably not have school.

There are several factors to help reduce some of the worry about children's safety:

1. We leave the final decision with the parent as to whether a child gets on the bus during bad weather.
2. All of our buses are equipped with 2-way radios. Drivers can talk with each other and with our offices.
3. We have 4 buses that are available for back-up to a route bus if it is stranded. We can get a back-up bus anywhere in the district in a reasonable amount of time.
4. Area farmers have always been very cooperative about helping get a stranded bus going again.
5. School buses are noted to be one of the safest means of transportation. Buses set up high so the driver has a greater visibility in bad weather than do cars. Also, the buses themselves are very visible to others.

Announcements of "no school" or "early dismissal" from school will be announced over KAUS(1480)/KAUS-FM(100), and KROC-FM(106.9) radio stations as well as KAAL and KTTC television stations.

There can be different weather conditions in different parts of the district. The general procedure is that if all the buses can't run, school will not be held. In towns where it is more protected, the weather may not appear to be as bad as it is in the country.

Please remember that we understand that the ultimate decision whether your child attends school during bad weather conditions rests with you, the parent. If you feel your child should not venture out in the weather, that is your decision and we can certainly agree with this.

Due to the suddenness of storms, we may have to dismiss school early. If you see conditions worsen in your area, please call us as we may not always be aware that the situation is getting bad in your part of the district.

Students will not be dismissed if we feel the storm is too severe to run the buses. Provisions will be made to attend to your child for as long as necessary.

Bus drivers have been instructed not to let an elementary age child off at home if it appears that no one is there. Your child will remain on the bus, and you can pick up your child at the School Age Childcare (SAC) Program or the District Office in Adams. Parents may be charged a child care fee.

We ask your cooperation in meeting the bus on time and doing what you can to help keep roads open. Keep your driveways opened the full width if the bus turns around at your place. Remember, those buses are very long and need room to make the turn into your place.

In summary, we can't forget that we live in Minnesota. We have to be prepared to operate during unpleasant weather.

School buses are noted as being a very safe means of transportation, but this doesn't mean a bus could not get into trouble. We, and all the parents, would certainly appreciate any assistance you could give the bus to put it back in operation.

**In the event of an accident, a parent, guardian, or emergency contact will be notified if your child is involved. Staff will instruct you where to pick up your child. DO NOT go to the scene of the accident; your child cannot be released until evaluated by medical personnel.**



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