

Student Management on School Buses

A school bus driver must be able to maintain acceptable levels of student behavior on his/her bus to avoid being distracted from the primary task of driving. If the driver is distracted by and/or loses control of the students, the driver's ability to control the bus may be seriously impaired. The following are suggestions to help the school bus driver maintain an acceptable level of student behavior.

General Attitude and Approach

- Set a good example; act the part of a person in a responsible position who follows the rules.
- Be friendly, but not familiar, to the students; your name is Mr., Mrs., Miss _____. Say hello when they get on the bus. Smile.
- Clearly establish your expectations — what the rules are and the reasons they exist. Try to make students feel that they have a responsibility in ensuring group safety.
- Give commands that stimulate an action: “Do this” instead of “Don’t do that.” Have a reason for what you ask a student to do and give the reason.
- Be consistent; don’t be lax one day and tough the next. Don’t hold grudges and don’t take things personally. If you make a mistake, admit it.
- Treat all students equally; don’t have favorites. Show respect. Be courteous and not sarcastic.
- Always control your temper and watch your tone of voice and language. Remember your sense of humor. Sometimes it pays not to hear things.
- Compliment students on positive behavior. Listen to the students — their suggestions, their complaints, their concerns.

Discipline

- Save discipline for safety-related behavior; don’t nitpick.
- Don’t get drawn into an argument with a student.
- Don’t threaten to do something you can’t do. Don’t threaten something and then NOT do it.
- Don’t let the situation get out of hand.

When There is a Problem

- Stop the bus. Park in a safe location off the road; perhaps a parking lot or a driveway.
- Secure the bus. Take the ignition key with you if you leave your seat.

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- Stand up and speak to the offender or offenders. Speak in a courteous manner with a firm voice. Remind the offender of the behavior expected. Don't show anger, but do show that you mean business.
- NEVER put a student off the bus except at school or at his or her residence/school bus stop.
- If you feel that the offense is serious enough that you cannot safely drive the bus, call for a school administrator or a parent to come to remove the student.
- Follow your district's procedures for further discipline or refusal of rights to ride the bus.

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