

**Cook County School District  
Bus Rider's  
Safety Management Plan Handbook**



**Transportation Office  
(229) 549-6556**

Dear Parent:

The CCSD provides transportation to and from school as a courtesy for eligible students residing in the district. The State of Georgia prescribes the conditions governing school bus operations and funds the service by allowing the District a given amount for eligible students transported.

Eligible students are defined by State statute as those residing in the District at least two miles from the school they should attend, as measured by the nearest practical route. The nearest practical route is the nearest traveled public road which may or may not be the road used by the school bus. However, in Cook County, we transport all students regardless of the distance that they may live from the school. Address eligibility is continually audited year round so that we may determine whether a student is riding the proper bus. CCSD does not run buses on private roads.

In order to meet the conditions outlined by the State and provide safe, prompt movement of students, the School district has adopted standard regulations and procedures and has provided restrictive measures for violations of the rules. For your information, these guidelines and regulations are outlined in this handbook.

The School District is pleased to provide transportation for its eligible students and solicits your assistance in helping create a safe and healthy operation. You may do so by reading this handbook and acknowledge receipt by completing a consent form provided by the bus driver and return this form within three days to the bus driver. We ask your cooperation with school personnel in developing proper behavior for those who ride buses.

If you should need information concerning bus routes, call the Transportation office.

Thank You

## BUS RIDER'S SAFETY HANDBOOK

### Parents and Bus Riders

The goal of this Bus Rider's Handbook is to help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for children and adults who ride school buses. Parents should take time to read and discuss the materials in this handbook with their children. Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by the district and should be treated as such.

### General Safety Rules

1. Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time will a student act toward, or address comments to a bus driver in a disrespectful manner, or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
2. Board and leave the bus at designated stops only. Designated stops are established by the transportation department – bus routes do not go door-to-door.
3. Only students who are eligible to ride may be transported and must ride their assigned bus established by address on record at campus – the only exception is delivery to grandparents' house only if they live in the same attendance zone.
4. **Do not ask to ride home on another bus with a friend.**
5. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to school if a child misses the bus.
6. Students will abide by the individual school's rules and regulations concerning bus students, including conduct and dress code.
7. Students who lose this privilege for disciplinary reasons are responsible for their own transportation.

### Bus Schedule

Buses will run as close as possible to the bus schedule. However, the first several weeks of school are a period of adjustment. Routes will not run early, but may occasionally run late until revisions are made. Please keep this in mind when arranging personal schedules.

Parents should discuss with their children a plan of action if the morning bus is missed. Students should know if their parents expect them to return home, go to a neighbor, walk to school, etc. (When mechanical or other problems cause a bus to run late, the schools will be notified, and the bus will make every stop, regardless of how late it is.)

### Procedures for Waiting for the Bus

1. Be at your bus stop ten minutes before the scheduled pick up time. Drivers will not wait or honk.
2. Stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. When the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
4. Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the door is opened.
5. Students might be required to walk up to 1/2 mile to their assigned bus stop.

### Loading the Bus

1. Do not push or shove.
2. Use the handrail and steps.
3. Walk to your seat. The bus will not move until all students are seated and secured by seat belt (if bus is equipped) **State Law – NO EXCEPTIONS**
4. Students will be assigned seats as determined by the bus driver. The bus driver may change seat assignments at any time.
5. Once the bus door is closed in preparation for departure, no students will be allowed to board or leave the bus.
6. Backpacks must be worn with both straps on both arms. Backpacks must be put in lap while riding the bus.

### Conduct on the Bus

1. Remain seated while the bus is moving.
2. Do not change seats.
3. A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another student a place to sit.
4. Each student will be expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until the bus door opens.
5. Loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition. Some conditions may constitute no talking at all. The bus driver will determine this.
6. Scuffling, fighting, and the use of obscene, vulgar, or profane language and gestures are forbidden.
7. Do not throw any object inside or out of the bus.
8. Do not mark, cut, or scratch any part of the bus. The person who is responsible will pay vandalism costs.
9. Pupils should use the emergency door and exit controls only during supervised drills or actual emergencies. **Do not touch!**
10. Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door or other driver controls except in cases of extreme emergency.
11. Students shall face forward with their backs against the back of the seat with their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the bus aisle for the duration of the trip.
12. Video recordings are made of student activity on the bus for disciplinary and training purposes.
13. Going to sleep and missing your bus stop will not be tolerated.

### **Getting off the Bus**

1. Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped and the door is open.
2. Use the handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus
3. Wait for your turn to leave the bus: pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
4. You must have a note from your parents/guardian with a valid telephone number to confirm permission for getting off the bus. Your principal must sign this note.
5. Stay clear of the bus when the engine is started. Do not chase or hang onto the bus at any time.
6. If any article drops or rolls near or under the bus, do not go after it. Go to the door of the bus and ask the driver for help.

### **Crossing the Street or Highway**

1. All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 15 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal you that it is safe to cross.
2. Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
3. **NEVER** cross the road behind the bus.
4. **CAUTION!** Be alert for the vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or unloading students.
5. Cross all the streets at intersections. Obey all traffic signals and signs on your way home.

### **Prohibited Items**

1. Tobacco
2. Live animals or insects
3. Glass containers
4. Alcoholic beverages
5. Weapons, explosive devices, harmful drugs or chemicals
6. Objects that do not fit in the student's lap or on the floor between the knees without extending above chin level.
7. Matches or cigarette lighters
8. Food or drinks (eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted.)
9. All electronic equipment including cell phones must be turned off (unless bus driver approves)
10. Any balls not in backpacks (footballs, soccer, basketballs, tennis, etc.)
11. Backpacks with wheels and handles
12. Aerosol sprays of any kind
13. Cosmetics out on bus (perfume, lipstick, fingernail polish, etc.)

### **Accidents or Emergencies**

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.
3. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
  - a. The student nearest door will open the door and hold it open.
  - b. Leave the bus in a single file as quickly and quietly as possible.
  - c. Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
  - d. Once outside the bus, follow the driver's instructions completely.

### **Extra-Curricular 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 be returned clean upon completion of a trip.
4. The sponsor will be responsible to see that the bus is clean after each trip.
5. The bus driver is in charge of the bus and safety of the students on the bus.
6. The bus driver is authorized to return to the school campus, should trip sponsor be unable to maintain control of the students' behavior.

**Please note - bus driver will give your child(ren) a Consent Form/Receipt of Handbook form that must be completed,**

**signed and returned to the bus driver within 3 days**

**STUDENTS WILL BE PICKED UP AND DELIVERED TO  
PRIMARY RESIDENCE ONLY**

**\*Students cannot be listed on two (2) bus rosters**

General bus changes must be in WRITING.

i.e. Student going home with another student needs a note  
from the sending parent AND the receiving parent and signed by principal.

**School Bus Discipline  
Pre K through Twelfth Grade**

The school bus is a continuation of the school day and all rules that apply to the regular school day still apply plus special rules that are set for school bus riders. These special rules cover instances not covered by general rules. All School Board policies that apply to student conduct and other student related activities apply to the school bus. The Principal/Designee will administer all discipline with assistance from the principal or his/her designee.

**BUS DISCIPLINE REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

Safety is a department priority; therefore, proper conduct on school buses by all transported students is required. Transportation is a privilege granted to students contingent upon the exhibition of proper behavior, therefore, the CCSD has established transportation student behavior guidelines which apply to all students. Each student and their parent/guardian is responsible for the behavior of the student before, after & while on school provided transportation.

A student's privilege to ride the school bus or in school provided transportation may be suspended or revoked. Revocation of a student's bus riding privilege is not considered an exclusion, expulsion, or suspension from school. The district does not provide alternative transportation for a student that has lost his/her riding privilege. Decisions regarding special education students will take into account their IEP needs/requirements.

Parents are also responsible for their child's behavior while they are at their designated bus stop. These riding rules apply there as well as in line up at school.

**These bus rules have been established for all students to follow to insure a safe ride for all.**

1. Respect the bus driver, other students, property and themselves.
2. Obey the bus driver's instructions/directions the first time given.
3. Keep hands and feet off other people and their property.
4. Sit while the bus is in motion.
5. Speak only to those around them in conversational (inside) voices using respectful words.
6. Communicate any problems or conflicts with the bus driver.

**Please note - bus driver will give your child(ren) a Consent Form/Receipt of Handbook form that must be completed, signed and returned to the bus driver within 3 days**

**To ensure the safety of all students, the following guidelines have been established to respond to students that interfere with the safety of others on CCSD provided transportation.**

### **LEVEL 1**

- Failure to follow driver's directions
- Standing, not facing forward, while bus is moving
- Boarding/exiting at other than assigned stop
- Excessive noise or misbehavior
- Horseplay (ie. Playing corners, throwing snow, chanting loudly)
- Food or drink on bus outside of driver & state standards
- Other forms of misbehavior that, in the view of the bus driver, create a safety concern.

### **Consequences:**

Driver will contact parent & transportation supervisor to alert them of continued issue on bus before a written warning is issued.

**1<sup>st</sup> Violation: A documented warning from the Principal or Designee. Parent contacted and documented. Disciplinary action will be at the principal's discretion.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Violation: Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary (Loss of School Privilege) Middle School two (2) days. High School three (3) days**

**3<sup>th</sup> Violation: Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary one (1) day, Middle School three (3) days. High School five (5) days**

**4<sup>th</sup> Violation: Considered Level 2**

- **During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy.**
- **If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus, (min 5 days off bus, along with a School Bus damage fee of \$60.00 is due before student will be allowed to return to riding the bus).**
- **At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.**

**Please note - bus driver will give your child(ren) a Consent Form/Receipt of Handbook form that must be completed,**

signed and returned to the bus driver within 3 days

## LEVEL 2

- Threatening comments
- Disrespecting others
- Possession or use of anything that may be considered a weapon
- Running beside a moving bus
- Distracting the driver
- Use of obscene or profane actions / language
- Extending any body parts out of the window while bus is moving
- Throwing or shooting objects
- Vandalism of school or student property ( min 5 days off bus, along with a School Bus damage fee of \$60.00 is due before student will be allowed to return to riding the bus)
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices

### Consequences:

Driver will contact parent & transportation supervisor to alert them of continued issue on bus

**1<sup>st</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary three (3) day, Middle School five (5) days. High School seven (7) days

**2<sup>nd</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary five (5) day, Middle School seven (7) days. High School ten (10) days

**3<sup>rd</sup> Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 3 and Elementary seven (7) day, Middle School ten (10) days. High School, A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

**4<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Considered Level 3

- During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy.
- If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus, (min 5 days off bus, along with a School Bus damage fee of \$60.00 is due before student will be allowed to return to riding the bus).
- At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.

**Please note - bus driver will give your child(ren) a Consent Form/Receipt of Handbook form that must be completed, signed and returned to the bus driver within 3 days**

### **LEVEL 3**

- Possession of tobacco (including e-cigs), alcohol or illegal drugs ( Vaping Policy will apply)
- Possession of a weapon (including look a likes & toys), ammunition, or fire
- Assault, violence toward bus driver or student(s)
- Confirmed case of bullying
- Flagrant disregard for safety

#### **Consequences:**

Driver will contact parent & transportation supervisor to alert them of continued issue on bus

**First Offense:** Minimum thirty (30) day bus suspension up to suspension of bus riding privilege for the remainder of the school year and referral to school office for additional disciplinary action. A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

This information serves as notice to parents that safety is of the highest priority of CCSD Transportation Department. These steps are in place to respond to behaviors that create a hazard to safe transportation.

Parents are urged to review this information with their children, establish their own expectations for safe behavior while on school provided transportation, and ensure that students are aware of the CCSD expectations for student behavior as stated above.

**Fighting on a bus is among the most serious offenses committed by students, as it endangers everyone riding the bus by causing the driver's attention to be diverted. Fighting on a school bus may result in immediate suspension from the bus and school with no prior warning or progressive disciplinary action being taken.**

- **During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy.**
- **If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus, (min 5 days off bus, along with a School Bus damage fee of \$60.00 is due before student will be allowed to return to riding the bus).**
- **At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.**



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# Student Busing Request Form

Please complete one form per student.



- SUBMIT FORM TO INITIATE BUSING
- THIS FORM IS REQUIRED FOR ALL BUSING CHANGES

This request is for:  2021-2022  2022-2023

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Adult(s) in Household

\_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Relationship to student \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Adult(s) in Household

\_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Relationship to student \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Home Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

Apartment/Unit # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Zip Code

Comments:

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Person

\_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Relationship to Student \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

Apartment/Unit # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Zip Code

Comments:

Lana Siska, Transportation Director  
Phone: 229-549-6556

Transportation questions or concerns can be emailed at [lanasiska@cook.k12.ga.us](mailto:lanasiska@cook.k12.ga.us)

**Warning do not disrupt school bus by attempting to get on bus, threatening bus Driver/students or any act that may be considered disruptive to the transporting of students. Violators will be charged with disruption of a public school.**

## **Disrupting a Public School in Georgia**

In its current iteration, the Disruption of a Public School statute reads:

“It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly, intentionally, or recklessly disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public school bus stop as designated by local boards of education. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, a person convicted of violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.” O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1181.