

**Cook County School District
Bus Rider's
Safety Management Plan Handbook
2025-2026**



**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 Safety Information

Bus Rules

Parents or guardians are responsible for the safety, conduct, and timely arrival of their children to, from, and at the designated school bus stop before the arrival of the school bus for pick-up and transport to school and the timely departure of the child after the school bus leaves the designated school bus stop after transporting the children from school.

Per Georgia Code 20-2-1181/20-2-1182, parents are not allowed on a school bus unless specifically authorized. Parents that board a bus, ignoring the warning of the bus operator, are subject to arrest and prosecution under the law. To talk with a driver or monitor, please contact the Transportation Departments at (229)549-6556 and request a conference. Please be prepared to provide the bus number and/or driver/monitor name, if possible. The Transportation Director will coordinate and set up a conference.

School bus transportation plays a critical role in the education of our nation's students and is the direct link between a neighborhood and the classroom. More than 25 million children ride the yellow bus every school day. Here are tips to keep our children safe at the bus stop from the National Association for Pupil Transportation.

Getting Ready for School

- Have your children put everything they carry in a backpack or school bag so that they won't drop things along the way.
- Encourage them to wear bright, contrasting colors so they will be more easily seen by drivers.
- Make sure children leave home on time so they can arrive at the bus stop before it is due, ideally at least five minutes early. Running after or in front of a bus is dangerous.

Walking to the Bus Stop

- Walk young children to the bus stop or encourage children to walk in groups. There is safety in numbers; groups are easier for drivers to see.

- Practice good pedestrian behavior: walk on the sidewalk, and if there is no sidewalk stay out of the street. If you must walk in the street, walk single file, face traffic and stay as close to the edge of the road as you can.
- Stop and look left, right and then left again if you must cross the street. Do the same thing at drive -ways and alleys. Exaggerate your head turns and narrate your actions so your child knows you are looking left, right and left.

At the Bus Stop

- Have children wait in a location where the driver can see them while driving down the street. Try to avoid waiting in a house or car.
- Do not let children play in the street. Playing with balls or other toys that could roll into the street is also dangerous.

Getting On and Off the Bus

- Warn children that if they drop something getting on and off the bus, they should never pick it up. Instead, they should tell the driver and follow the driver's instructions.
- Remind children to look to the right before they step off the bus.
- If you meet your child at the bus stop after school, wait on the side where the child will be dropped off, not across the street. Children can be so excited to see you after school that they dash across the street and forget the safety rules.

Mobile Devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices can be permitted on the school bus as long as:

- The Bus driver has given permission to use electronic devices on the bus.
- They are in backpacks or other holders, keeping hands free to use handrails while boarding and departing the bus.
- Sound is muted or headphones, ear buds or similar devices are used.
- Content does not violate the law or school district policy and procedures.
- Students cannot use communicate or video on cellphones while on the bus.
- Use does not create a distraction for the driver.

Bus Changes

- For the safety of students, all bus changes will need to be made in writing and turned into the front office. The front office will send a bus change form to the homeroom teacher, and they will give it to the bus driver. Drivers are NOT allowed to take bus notes from parents or students.

DANGER ZONES

DANGER FROM PASSING CARS

DANGER ZONE

12 FEET

SCHOOL BUS

DANGER ZONE

MOST DANGEROUS

DANGER ZONE

MOST DANGEROUS

DANGER ZONE

12 FEET

WALKING AREA



OFFICE OF
SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

California Department
of Education

School Buses are Like Traffic Signals



Bus Expectations



SCHOOL BUS EXPECTATIONS			
	LOADING	RIDING	UNLOADING
BE SAFE	WALK WAIT FOR DOOR TO OPEN USE HANDRAIL ONE STAIR AT A TIME	STAY SEATED KEEP AISLE CLEAR NO EATING OR DRINKING FACE FORWARD WEAR SEAT BELT	STAY SEATED UNTIL DOOR OPENS UNLOAD SINGLE FILE ONE STAIR AT A TIME WALK AT LEAST 12 FEET FROM BUS
BE RESPONSIBLE	BE ON TIME BE IN LINE BE READY FIND YOUR SEAT CHECK IN WITH BUS PASS	BACK PACK ON LAP STAY SEATED PAY ATTENTION USE CELL PHONE AND OTHER DEVICES PROPERLY	GET OFF AT ASSIGNED STOP BE READY LEAVE A CLEAN SEAT CHECK OUT WITH BUS PASS
BE RESPECTFUL	USE GOOD MANNERS INDOOR VOICES BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS WELCOME GREETING	FOLLOW BUS DRIVER INSTRUCTIONS SILENT CELL PHONES USE INDOOR VOICES TREAT OTHERS KINDLY	LISTEN TO ADULTS KEEP HANDS AND FEET TO SELF EXIT QUIETLY EXIT GREETING



TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR RIDE



Bus Safety:

1. Obey bus driver instructions at all times
2. Remain seated, facing forward
3. Be respectful by keeping hands to self and using appropriate language
4. Do not throw items inside the bus or out of the window
5. Keep all noise levels low, including voices, cell phones, or anything the bus driver indicates is too loud or distracting
6. Bus drivers have the right to assign seats to students.
7. Obey Bus drivers rules that may be posted on the bus.

Driver will enforce disciplinary rules for SAFETY, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY

PARENTS & STUDENTS: Remember these important safety policies:

- A. Cell phones, audio, video recording, or any other items determined by driver to cause disruptive or unsafe conditions may not be transported. Students are responsible for any and all electronics brought onto the bus.
- B. 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
- C. Students must depart the bus at their **designated bus stop** except when the student has a signed bus stop assignment form from the parent/guardian, approved through the school office, giving permission to get off at another stop. No more than two bus stops may be authorized for each student.
- D. Students are responsible to use seatbelts when provided.
- E. Parents or guardians are responsible for the safety, conduct, and timely arrival of their children to, from, and at the designated school bus stop before the arrival of the school bus for pick up.
- F. Students, parents, or guardians shall arrive at least 5 minutes prior to pick-up or drop off scheduled bus stop times.
- G. **PreK students** may not be left unattended or released without authorized adult at a bus stop. By registering students for home-to-school transportation, parents acknowledge all other grades have the ability to get themselves home.
- H. Parents may be financially responsible for any damage done by their student.
- I. Prohibited Items: Live animals, weapons, skateboards, scooters, bikes, balloons, glass containers, cups (Yeti, RTIC, Stanley, etc.). Large products should be transported by parent/guardian.

*Water bottles are permitted as long as they are capped and only contain water.

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

COOK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION

The Cook County District Transportation system exists to provide safe and efficient transportation to and from each child's educational learning environment. Students who have the opportunity to ride district school buses may do so as long as they display behavior that is reasonable and safe. Choosing to engage in unacceptable behavior will result in loss of bus service. As per Georgia law "Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right."

- Every time a student violates a bus rule raises the chance a driver is distracted. Therefore, every time a student violates a bus rule directly raises the chance of a bus being in an accident.

The responsibility for student supervision by the District shall begin when the lights are activated on the bus in the morning and is retained until the child leaves the bus at the end of the day; or until released to the parent/guardian in a manner consistent with guidelines on release of students. Drivers are responsible for student conduct on their bus.

The Student Transportation Code of Conduct as well as each individual school's Student Code of Conduct is in effect on the bus and at bus stops. When necessary, the Transportation Director will conduct a preliminary investigation for violations of these rules that have occurred on the school bus or at bus stops. All student codes of conduct are in accordance with the Cook County School District Board Policy JICDA-R Code of Conduct.

The following information is a guideline for disciplinary actions when rules are violated. These guidelines are subject to change depending upon the severity of the student's actions. The Transportation Director and Student Services Director will review as required any disciplinary consequences so it's effective and fair to all stakeholders to ensure a safe, orderly, and effective bus environment. Any violation of the district's school bus policy could be recommended for an expulsion hearing or could be removed from all Cook County public school buses for the remainder of the school year.

Bus Discipline

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all routes. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extra-curricular events (i.e., field trips or competitions) will be the sole discretion of the school district. Parents or guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges.

Special Ed. students will receive discipline in conjunction with the student's I.E.P.

Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school may also result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual school building and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of serious misconduct will be provided to the School SRO and Student Services. Records may also be maintained in the transportation office.

Students damaging school buses will be responsible for the damage. Failure to pay such damages/ restitution (or make arrangements to reimburse) within 3 school days will result in the loss of bus privileges until reimbursement is made.

In cases involving criminal conduct (i.e., assault, weapons, possession or vandalism), the transportation office will press charges on the student involved and will inform the Superintendent, local law enforcement officials and the Student Services Director.

Except as otherwise set forth herein, the general progressive discipline plan for bus misbehavior is as follows:

1st Violation: A documented warning from the Principal or Designee. Parent contacted and documented. Disciplinary action will be at the principal's discretion **based on the severity of the rules infraction.**

2nd Violation: Bus suspension for Primary and Elementary three (3) day, Middle School three (3) days. High School three (3) days

3rd Violation: Bus suspension for Primary and Elementary five (5) days, Middle School five (5) days. High School five (5) days

4th Violation: Bus suspension for Primary and Elementary seven (7) days, Middle School seven (7) days. High School seven (7) days

5th Violation: Bus suspension for Primary and Elementary ten (10) days, Middle School ten (10) days. High School ten (10) days

6th Violation: Primary, Elementary, High students. A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

Once a student has reached the accumulative number of referrals based on grade level, he/she will automatic be suspended from riding the school bus, pending hearing with the District Hearing Officer.

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, the parents/ guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to 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.

Minor

Level One: Disruptive Conduct

Disruptive conduct includes any activity in which a student engages that tends to impede the orderly operation of or disturbs school bus operating procedures or activities.

Acts of disruptive conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Delaying the operation of the school bus
- Lying to the driver or aide/monitor
- Using profanity among other students
- Failing to carry out directions issued by a staff person with supervisory responsibility
- Getting on or off the bus at an unauthorized stop without driver or aide/monitor permission
- Eating or drinking on the bus
- Standing or sitting improperly while the bus is moving
- Pushing, tripping, engaging in general horseplay
- Encouraging others to misbehave
- Littering
- Not sitting in an assigned seat on the bus
- Violating other non-safety-related procedures
- Operating an electronic devices radio or other audio device, a video, or other such devices that jeopardies the safety of others

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. 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.

Major
Level Two: Disorderly Conduct

Disorderly conduct includes those activities in which student engage that are directed against persons or property and the consequences of which tend to endanger the health or safety of themselves or others. Some instances of disruptive conduct may overlap certain criminal offenses, justifying both administrative sanctions and court proceedings

- . Acts of disruptive conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Fighting (physical contact) * Automatic Removal*
 - Stealing - student will be responsible for restoring the property and law enforcement could possibly be notified
 - Making threats against others;
- Defacing property (student will be responsible for restoring the property (minimum \$120) or make arrangements for reimbursement within 3 school days. Failure to do so will result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.
 - Spitting, harassing, threatening, intimidating, or physically abusing or hitting anyone • Using profanity, abusive language, and/or obscene gestures directed at school official (Min 5 Days off bus)
 - Acting in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of the school bus
 - Refusing to obey school personnel or agents (such as volunteer aides or chaperons) whose responsibilities include the supervision of students (Min 5 Days off bus)
 - Occupying or blocking the school bus in any way with the intent to deprive others of its use;
 - Making false accusations about school employees (bus drivers and monitors) (Minimum 5 days off bus)

* **Tobacco /Vapors Pipes/ Electronic Cigarettes (Follow vaping Policy)**

- * Verbal sexual harassment *Administrative referral*
- Acting in any other manner that interferes with the safe delivery of student transportation services. (Min 5 Days off bus)
- Blatant refusal to obey a reasonable request of school administrator/ transportation administrator - consequence as appropriate by administrator (Min 5 Days off bus with the possibility of expulsion)

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/or 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. 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.

Level 3: Criminal Conduct (along with school Discipline plan)

Criminal conduct includes those activities in which students engage that result in violence to themselves or to another's person or property or that pose a direct and serious threat to the safety of themselves or others in or around the school bus and at the school bus stop while the bus is present. These activities usually require administrative actions that result not only in the immediate permanent removal of the student from the school bus and the school but also in the intervention of law enforcement authorities and/or in action by the board.

Acts of criminal conduct include, but are not limited to, the following on school-supervised property, equipment (including state- and district-owned school buses) and at school bus stops when the school bus is present:

- Assault and battery, extortion
- A bomb threat or other threat that directly endangers the safety of a person or the school bus;
- The possession, use, or transfer of a weapon;
- Sexual offenses physical (school SRO will be notified)
- Arson or the threat of arson;
- Threat to the bus driver, aide/monitor, a teacher, principal, or the district's designee.
- Furnishing, selling, or possessing controlled substances unauthorized substances, as defined by board policy (drugs, narcotics, or poison, prescriptions)
- Violation of the District Drug Policy. (Suspension or expulsion from school and bus)

*The Board adopts the stipulations of the Drug Act passed by the Georgia Legislature. This act states that it is unlawful for any person to knowingly or intentionally possess a controlled substance (depressant, stimulant, counterfeit or illegal drug). Any students who violate this act are subject to suspension and/or expulsion from school and prosecution by law enforcement officer.

* Students are not allowed to knowingly possess, use, transmit, or to be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, nor to knowingly possess, use or transmit paraphernalia related to the illegal use of drugs: on the school grounds during and immediately after school hours; on the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group; OR, off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event. Drug Paraphernalia: Possession is construed to mean on the person himself, in his locker, books, desk, book bag, or any other student property, which at the time is or was on school property. "Paraphernalia" means any instrument,

Consequences for level three Violation will result in automatic suspension from bus /school and will result in referral to the District Hearing Office.

Prohibited Items

- Tobacco/Vaping devices
- Live animals or insects
- Glass containers
- Alcoholic beverages
- Weapons, explosive devices, harmful drugs or chemicals
- Objects that do not fit in the student's lap or on the floor between the knees without extending above chin level.
- Matches or cigarette lighters
- Food or drinks (eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted.)
- All electronic equipment including cell phones must be turned off
- Any balls not in backpacks (footballs, soccer, basketballs, tennis, etc.)
- Backpacks with wheels and handles
- Aerosol sprays of any kind
- Cups (Yeti, Stanley, RTIC, etc.)
- Cosmetics out on bus (perfume, lipstick, fingernail polish, etc.)

**Weapons can be classified as any object that can be used to cause bodily harm (i.e. scissors, pencils, shoe heels, etc.)