

DeSoto Independent School District

School Bus Rider's Safety Handbook



*Parents, Guardians and School District working together for
the safety of our students.*

Dear Parent/Guardian

The DeSoto Independent School District provides bus transportation to and from school for eligible students residing outside of the two mile radius of their home school. The State of Texas governs school bus operations and funds the service by allotting the district a given amount for eligible students transported. DeSoto ISD contracts with First Student Management Company to provide transportation services for its students.

To meet the conditions outlined by the state and ensure our students arrive to school safe, on time and ready to learn each day, the school district has adopted standard rules and procedures and has provided restrictive measures for violations of the rules. They are outlined in this booklet for your information and for the guidance of your child. Some of the same information can also be found in your Student Code of Conduct.

DeSoto ISD is pleased to provide transportation service for its eligible students and seek your assistance in helping to create a safe operation environment. **You may do so by reading and sharing the enclosed material with your child. Please acknowledge receipt by completing and returning the enclosed card/letter to the [bus driver](#) or campus office. Upon receipt of the signed card/letter,** your student's ID card will reflect that he/she is eligible to ride the bus. We ask your cooperation with school and transportation personnel in developing proper behavior patterns for our students who ride the bus.

Please read the entire packet and if you should need information concerning student misconduct on buses, you should contact the student's campus principal. If you need information concerning bus routes, schedules or other issues, please call DeSoto ISD's Transportation Coordinator at 972 274-0627.

CONTENTS

General Rules.....
Conduct On the Bus.....
Accidents or Emergencies.....
Prohibited Items.....
Discipline.....

Parents are advised that the District does not supervise bus stops and the District is not responsible for the control and conduct of students at the bus stops. Parents are encouraged to supervise their child until they are safely aboard the school bus.

RESPECT
Treat other with respect
Use good manners
Do not use bad language
Respect authority

RESPONSIBILITY
Do what you are supposed to do
Do your share to make your
school and community the best

ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST

GENERAL RULES

Only students eligible to ride may be transported. Students must ride their assigned bus.

At the Bus Stop

1. When walking to the bus stop, walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left facing traffic.
2. Route time is approximate and students should always go to the bus stop about five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
3. While at the bus stop, wait in a safe place away from the street. **Do not run and play while waiting. STAND ON THE SIDE WALK . Do not stand on the lawn or porch of the property where the bus stop is located.**
4. **Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the car with a stranger.** Always go straight home and tell your parents if a stranger tries to talk to you or pick you up. If it happens on your way to school go immediately and tell the office staff. Try to remember the color and type of car and as much about the person that you can.
5. When the bus approaches, form a line and be prepared to load immediately. For the safety of all students and to avoid students chasing after a moving bus, once a school bus has departed from the curb, at either the school site or bus stop, the driver is not permitted to stop the bus to board late students. Student(s) should not wait until the bus get to the stop to unload from the car or walk out of their home.
6. Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop, and until red loading lights come on.
7. Do not push or shove.
8. **When the bus does not show up on time:** If you are reasonably sure that the delay is not due to weather conditions, please allow at least 10-15 minutes before leaving the bus stop. School buses have to endure the same rush hour traffic conditions that plague commuters. Traffic issues can easily delay your bus arrival time.

On the bus:

1. **Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time will a student act toward or address comments to the bus driver in a disrespectful manner, or refuse to cooperate with the driver.**
2. Go directly to a seat. **Remain seated and facing forward for the entire ride.**
3. Talk quietly so the driver will not be distracted.
4. Never throw things on the bus or out the window. Never play with the emergency exits.
5. Keep the aisles clear at all times
6. If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
7. **ALL BAGGAGE/BAND INSTRUMENTS** – Any items brought on the bus must be able to sit in students lap, students must be able to hold baggage at all times. **NO** band instruments can be placed in a seat.

8. **Food and beverages** are not permitted to eat or drink on the school busses at any time. Students not following these guidelines will receive consequences as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Exit the bus:

1. Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped and the driver releases you.
2. Wait your turn to leave the bus; pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
3. When getting off the bus make sure you walk (not run) three more steps away from the door. Stay away from the bus wheels and watch out for moving cars.
4. Once you get off the bus, go straight home so an adult will know where you are.
5. Only get on and off the bus at you designated stop.
6. If you leave something on the bus, never return to the bus to get it. The driver may not see you come back and they may begin moving the bus. To retrieve your item you may call the district Transportation Coordinator at 972 274-0627 or First Student Bus Barn at 972 293-8531. Also, if you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you attempt to pick it up so they will know you are near the bus.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS

- **Remain seated at all times while the bus is moving.** Each student will be expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until released by the driver.
- Do not change seats.
- A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another a place to sit.
- Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition.
- Students shall keep arms, hands, legs, or other objects inside the bus. **Hanging out of the window will result in an automatic suspension of riding privileges along with a mandatory parent meeting.**
- **Scuffling, fighting, bullying and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language and gestures are strictly forbidden. Violation may result in immediately suspension of transportation services and a mandatory parent meeting.**
- Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus. Keep all pens and pencils put away at all times.
- Do not mark, cut, or scratch any part of the bus. Vandalism cost will be paid by the person(s) responsible. **Destruction of transportation property will result in immediate termination of transportation services.**
- Students should only use emergency door and exit controls during supervised drill or actual emergency. **Tampering with emergency door or exit control can lead to permanent terminated bus service.**

- **Students should never attempt to sit in the driver's seat or operate the passenger door or other driver controls except in cases of extreme emergency.**

ACCIDENTS OR EMERGENCIES

- **Follow the driver's instructions.**
- **If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.**
 - A. Leave the bus in a single file line as quietly as possible. Evacuation will start with the seat closet to the door.**
 - B. Once outside the bus, follow the driver's instructions completely.**

PROHIBITED ITEMS

1. Tobacco, alcohol, and glass containers.
2. **LIVE** animals or insect.
3. Weapons, explosive devices, matches or cigarette lighter, harmful drugs or chemicals.
4. Any object (musical instrument, shop project) too large to be placed in the students lap or on the floor between knees.
5. Pages, beepers, laser lights/pointers.
6. Due to the increase of cell phone usage; if a cell phone is causing a safety distraction, cell phone will be confiscated and parents will be responsible for retrieving from transportation.
7. Students will be responsible for the items they bring on the bus.

DISCIPLINE

The SCHOOL BUS is an EXTENSION of the CLASSROOM, and the CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR will administer discipline with assistance from the bus driver. ALL school board policies that apply to student conduct and other student related activities apply also to the SCHOOL BUS.

DISRUPTION OF TRANSPORTATION

1. A person commits an offense if the person intentionally disrupts, prevents, or interferes with the lawful transportation of children to or from school or an activity sponsored by a school on a vehicle owned or operated by a county or independent school district.
2. An offense under this section is a Class C Misdemeanor. [Sections 37.127-37.150 reserved for expansion].
3. Camera equipment may be placed on school buses for the purpose of videotaping student's behavior.

First Offense

The driver will inform the student of the discipline program. Depending on the issue at hand, the student will be given a verbal warning for misconduct. Effort will be made to solve the problem prior to writing a referral and reporting the student to the Campus Administrator.

Second & Third Offense

A School Bus Incident Report is written and a copy goes to the Campus Administrator, who will contact the parent/guardian, First Student and the District Transportation Coordinator requesting that the appropriate disciplinary action be taken.

Third Offense

A portion of the following section can be found in the Student Code of Conduct.

Elementary Riders

- 1st referral - warning (serious offense-no warning)
- 2nd referral – 3 days loss of bus privileges
- 3rd referral – 5 days loss of bus privileges
- 4th referral – 10 days loss of bus privileges
- 5th referral – off the bus till the end of the semester or year

Secondary Riders

- 1st referral – warning (serious offense-no warning)
- 2nd referral – 5 days loss of bus privileges
- 3rd referral – 10 days loss of bus privileges
- 4th referral – off the bus till the end of the semester or year