

# Managing Student Behavior

On the school bus

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It's a great responsibility for school bus drivers to navigate the roads on a mission to safely deliver students to their schools and homes. While the district relies on bus drivers to safely operate vehicles, drivers and monitors are also expected to manage passenger behavior.

The biggest safety challenge for drivers and monitors may be the students who disobey rules, bully other passengers, or act out with violence. Today, we're going to review a few things you can do to help manage student misbehavior on your bus.

## Managing Student Behavior

### Introduction

- Explain the importance of keeping control of student behavior on the bus
- State the standards for behavior in our district
- Describe the situations that put the school bus driver most at risk
- Describe ways to maintain acceptable student behavior on the bus



Today, we are going to talk about student management. When we are done, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of keeping control of student behavior on the bus
- State the standards for behavior in D103
- Describe the situations that put the school bus driver most at risk
- Describe ways to maintain acceptable student behavior on the bus

**What is the most difficult situation you have  
ever experienced - or have heard about  
someone else experiencing - on a school bus?**



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(Write down on large post-it note list)

Ok, at the end of this session, we'll revisit this list.

## School Bus Driver Jobs

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- To operate the bus safely
- To not be distracted
- To protect students from harm



Being a bus driver is a lot of responsibility. It is up to YOU the driver to be in charge of the bus and the students.

A driver can't operate a bus safely if he or she is worrying about disciplining the students.

The driver has many jobs. Those include:

- Operating the bus safely
- To not be distracted
- To protect students from harm



Let's start with what NOT to do...

## What not to do...

- Unreasonable expectations
- Never put a student off your bus
- Never lose your temper
- Never use physical force
- Never use profanity
- Don't wait until the behavior(s) are out of control



Don't have unreasonable expectations such as:

- Silence on the bus
  - You must learn to tolerate some talking, but be consistent.
  - As your state of mind changes from day to day, your ability to tolerate the noise may also change.
  - However, the students won't understand if what is acceptable one day is not acceptable the next.

Other unreasonable expectation can be: (DON'T CLICK)

- Feet always out of the aisle
- Expecting students to follow the rules 100% of the time

Students are young people in periods of physical and emotional development.

They are constantly exploring and adjusting.

They need some help understanding what acceptable and appropriate behavior on a school bus is.

Keep in mind that some of our students have never ridden a bus before. And those who have, maybe they've never learned what the expectations are. And don't forget, with schools in remote learning, it's been a year since many students have been on the

bus. They may have forgotten what your expectations are.

You might be thinking, “Anthony, they know better! They know what the rules are!” Do they? How can you expect students to follow rules that no one has told them about?

Imagine coming to work one day and I make a new rule that says “if you leave your strobe light on when no students are on your bus, you will be terminated.”

But I never told you.

So you get caught, and I fire you.

Is that fair to you?

Yes, you should know the law states you must have at least one student on your bus when your strobe light is on. “You should KNOW better as a professional school bus driver.” But is it fair that I didn’t tell you about my new rule?

Don’t expect students to know what you want them to do. Tell them. Remind them constantly.

**\*\*NEXT BULLET POINT\*\***

## What not to do...

- Do not threaten the entire bus for the transgressions of a few
- Do not threaten, “I’m not moving this bus unless...”
  - (We’ll see you in a few years....)
- Do not let their attitude or behavior control yours





# Reasonable Expectations



Let's explore reasonable expectations!

## Reasonable Expectations

- Remain seated
- No food or drink
- Be nice
- Be safe



In general, the rules for acceptable student behavior are simple.

You should explain each rule. Saying “because I said so!” Doesn’t work.

Rules should be short and stated positively to promote good behavior.

Expectations should be reviewed with students during the first week of school and routinely throughout the year.

**REMAIN SEATED** - You can say to the students: If I you’re not seated and I have to stop real fast or if I hit a bump, you could fall and get hurt. Bus seats keep you safe only if you stay seated and face forward.

**NO FOOD OR DRINK** - We don’t eat or drink on the bus because our friends could be allergic to what we’re eating. Also, it’s possible you could choke and I wouldn’t see you to help. So, to be safe, please do not eat or drink (other than water) on the bus.

**BE NICE** - Be nice covers everything from no fighting, spitting, cursing, bullying, foul language, no hitting others (including no

hitting the bus driver or monitor)

BE SAFE - Be safe covers safety at the bus stop like no pushing, don't cross the street until the driver gives you the signal to cross as well as on the bus such as keep all body parts inside the bus.

## Risky Situations



## At Risk

- Situations that distract you and threaten your ability to operate the bus safely.
- What situations do you find distracting?



I said that the bus driver has to operate the bus safely. However, it is important to talk about what situations inside the bus distract the driver from being able to operate the bus safely.

### At Risk

Are situations that distract you and threaten your ability to operate the bus safely.

A distraction is something that takes away your concentration from driving.  
It's probably something that will make you have to look in the rear-view mirror.

What situations do you find distracting? (Write down on flip chart)

Bullying cannot be tolerated and should be written up as soon as possible. Many school districts have had parents file law suits because their children were bullied in school or on the bus and school officials did not take appropriate measures to address the problem.





## Driver & Student Relations



Let's go over some Driver Choices. What you can choose to do.

## Driver & Student Relations

- Create a positive atmosphere
  - Be firm but fair
  - Be consistent
- Use Mr. Mrs., or Miss
- Be responsive to student complaints about:
  - Bullying
  - Harassment
  - Or tormenting
- Stay alert, watch for signs of such behaviors



Drivers can create a positive situation (CLICK) by setting a positive example for the children to imitate. It is the driver's responsibility to maintain student control. If you behave in a friendly and dignified manner, you can establish a positive relationship with your students that will shape the way they treat each other, as well as you. If you are (CLICK) firm but fair in your treatment of students, (CLICK) consistent in what you say and do, your students will trust you and have confidence in you and your authority. You can set the tone that will help to eliminate discipline problems.

(CLICK) Always instruct your students to address you in a professional manner by using Mr., Mrs., or Miss; such as Mr. Wall, Mrs. Mitchell, or Miss Sherry. (CLICK) Always be responsive to student complaints about (CLICK) bullying, (CLICK) harassment or (CLICK) tormenting. (CLICK) Stay alert and watch for signs of such behaviors.



## **Driver Choices**

### **Communicate: Give polite directives**

- Start communicating with students on the first day of the route. Treat each student as a first time rider.
- Greet students, be friendly, and use a calm voice.
- Introduce yourself (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) and set a professional tone.
- Give polite directives and teach the rules



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## **Driver Choices**

**Helpful: Help educate**

- Help students learn, understand, and comply with the bus rules.
- Remind students of the rules and how to be safe on/around the bus.
- Lead by example (follow your own rules)



Help students learn, understand, and comply with the bus rules.

Remind students of the rules and how to be safe on/around the bus.

Lead by example (follow your own rules)

## Driver Choices

### Observe and Document: Create a record/history

- Observation starts at the bus stop. As you approach and leave the stop, student safety is your responsibility.
- Compliment good behavior.
- Log student misbehavior each day, handle offenses that you can at your level.
- Write citations if necessary.



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Write citations if necessary.

(DON'T CLICK!)

Students need the same things that adults do:

Respect

Recognition

To feel in control of their circumstances

To associate with their peers

To feel important to their peers

## Driver Choices

**Improve: Make every day better**

- Be proactive and build a positive relationship with students by learning and using their names.
- Be a role model and act as you would want the students to act. Set reasonable expectations.
- Giving daily reminders and directions is only an infraction if the student is **not** responsive to the reminder.



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## **Driver Choices**

**Consistency: Never stop enforcing safety**

- Correct misbehavior as it occurs, do not wait until you are having a bad day.
- Give clear direction and the “choice to comply” to the students.
- Every day is a new day, so do not hold grudges.



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Give clear direction and the “choice to comply” to the students.

Every day is a new day, so do not hold grudges.

## **Driver Choices**

### **Knowledge is awesome**

- The bus is an extension of the classroom as students need to be taught, coached, and mentored.



And remember... The bus is an extension of the classroom as students need to be taught, coached, and mentored.

## **Communicate with Students**

- Share your bus expectations
- For the first week of school, remind students of the bus expectations.
- Ask them to repeat them for you.
- Again, do this periodically throughout the school year.

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Pupil management is the hardest part of your job. There isn't a lot you can do about the car that cut you off in traffic, but the safety and behavior of the students are your responsibility. Why is it that some drivers never seem to have problems, even with the most difficult students? These drivers meet their problems head-on as soon as they occur. If students sense they can get away with bad behavior, things will only get worse. If you think citations, cameras, and intimidation will take care of your disciplinary problems, you are in for a rude awakening.

Take the time to learn the names of your students. Interact with students as frequently as possible. Greet each student in a timely fashion. You are the first school contact for your students each morning and may set the tone for their entire day. Always make eye contact with each student. This will let the students know you take an interest in them.

Drivers are expected to enforce established rules of conduct for school bus riders and applicable school district administrative regulations. Safety rules should be reviewed with your students. Proper precautions must be taken to avoid physical injury to student passengers and/or school employees. Drivers are to manage minor disciplinary problems on a daily basis. In some cases, bus citations will be necessary and/or required.



The Principal (or his/her designee) of the school in which the student is enrolled is the only person who has the authority to discipline that student.

## **Pupil Management**

### **Bullying & Harassment**

- What is bullying?
- Clearly establish with students your expectations for their behavior
- Be firm
- Be courteous
- Treat all students fairly and be consistent

What is bullying? Bullying is a deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic such as; Age, National Origin, Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Physical Attributes, Physical or Mental Disability, Social Economic, and Family Status.

(CLICK) Clearly establish with students your expectations for their behavior, what the specific rules are for riding the bus and the reasons why those rules are in place. (CLICK) Be firm with students, but not tough. (CLICK) Be courteous and not sarcastic, (CLICK) treat all students fairly and be consistent.

It is the responsibility of the bus driver (and monitor) to recognize when a student is being bullied or harassed on the school bus and to follow the proper procedure for reporting the incident.

## **Student Management**

### **Giving Directives**

- Do not allow inappropriate behavior and actions to continue
- Handle student offenses, that you can, by:
  - Assigning or reassigning seats
  - Restricting radio use
  - Separating disruptive behavior

Every driver will encounter situations requiring him/her to enforce the safety rules and ultimately determine what methods they will use to discourage ongoing problems.

(CLICK) Do not allow inappropriate behavior and actions to continue. Always make every effort to (CLICK) handle the student offenses, that you can, by

(CLICK) assigning or reassigning seats,

(CLICK) restricting radio use, and

(CLICK) separating disruptive students. Again, never discipline the entire group of students on the bus when only a few students are being disruptive.

## **Student Management**

### **Giving Directives**

- The Instigator
- Attention Seeker
- The Leader
- The Avoider

Identifying and understanding the students is a step towards better communication and discipline. Here are a few types of personalities you may encounter:

(CLICK) The Instigator. This is the student that tries to make you upset and act emotional. These students are normally seeking recognition and attention.

(CLICK) Attention Seeker. The student that will start talking back and speaking for the group when they are asked to stop disruptive behavior. These students are normally seeking affiliation. They want to be seen as part of the “in crowd.”

(CLICK) The Leader. The student who normally starts or antagonizes the inappropriate behavior, however, once the driver or adult addresses the behavior the Leader likes to sit back and observe the interaction between the driver and the “Attention Seeker”. These children are normally seeking power and will generally sit back and laugh regardless of the outcome. Identifying this type of student and keeping him or her near you (by seat assignment) will help head off problems down the road.

(CLICK) The Avoider. This is the student who just wants to get out of the picture. He or she generally will try to get up and move

to a different seat. These students normally do not want to be associated with problems. Try not to make these students sit next to the disruptive ones as a form of discipline. If you have no other choice, only make it a temporary arrangement and reassure the well-behaved student they have done nothing wrong.

This information is given to you only to enhance your understanding of what the students are feeling and experiencing. Always keep an open mind when addressing the students, do not assume just because another driver was having student control problems with the student that you will. If you approach the student in an aggressive and defensive manner, you will receive the same in return.

## **Student Management**

### **Steps to Student Control**

- Step 1: Polite Directive
- Step 2: Set the Expectations
- Step 3: State the Consequences
- Step 4: Provide a Choice
- Step 5: Break Contact
- Step 6: Follow-Up

### **Step 1: Polite Directive**

At this point you state your directive. “Martha, please sit down!” If the student does not immediately respond, repeat yourself, maintain a calm and controlled voice. Ask the student no more than three times. If the student begins to make disrespectful comments to you or under their breath, DO NOT TAKE IT PERSONALLY!!

### **Step 2: Set the Expectations**

Focus only on the action. State what the expectation is “Rick, you are expected to sit down and remain seated until we arrive at your bus stop”. Don’t turn the expectation into a personal directive “I am the bus driver and this is my bus and you will listen to me or else”. If the student is still not complying, move to Step #3.

### **Step 3: State the Consequences**

Simply and directly state the consequences to the student’s actions. “Sherry, I am informing you if you do not sit down and remain in your seat, you will be expected to come up front and sit in the front seat for the remainder of the week.” REMEMBER TO REMAIN CALM. If the student is still not complying, move to Step #4.

#### **Step 4: Provide a Choice**

Place the responsibility and choice on the student, where it should be. Make all statements with confidence and in a calm manner. “Bill, you have a decision to make. You can sit down and remain seated with your friends or you will be expected to sit in the front seat for the rest of the week”. Immediately move to Step #5.

#### **Step 5: Break Contact**

Immediately break contact with the student by calmly stating “You have a choice to make and I will talk to you in a few minutes.” Break eye contact, turn around, and patiently wait approximately two to three (2-3) minutes. At this time generally the student will realize you are not going to get angry, start yelling, and will probably comply with your initial directive. If the student is still not complying, you may have to address the problem at the school. If this situation is during the afternoon run, address it at the school in the morning. If this incident is happening in the morning, address it as soon as you arrive at the school. Empty threats have no purpose. DO NOT THREATEN WITH A CONSEQUENCE YOU CANNOT APPLY.

#### **Step 6: Follow-Up**

Remember, every day is a new day, do not hold grudges. Make sure you follow-up with a one-on-one conversation with the student as soon as possible. Make statements such as “Rick, you are expected not to use profanity or name-calling on the bus. As a consequence of your language towards me yesterday, you will be assigned to sit in the front seat for two weeks. If you choose not to sit in your assigned seat, you will be required to sit in the front seat for the rest of the year.”

Try not to speak to the student inside the bus by yourself, call dispatch to have a principal or teacher come to your bus as a witness or step just outside the bus door. DO NOT ASK THE PERSON FROM THE SCHOOL TO GIVE THE STUDENT YOUR DIRECTIVE AND CONSEQUENCES. You will be the one who will have to communicate with this student every day, opening the lines of communication early will result in better control.



Now, let's revisit some of the difficult situations we listed at the beginning of our meeting.



# Managing Student Behavior

On the school bus

Anthony Mendoza, CDPT



Remember our district bus expectations:

1. Remain seated.
2. No food or drink.
3. Be nice.
4. Be safe.

There is a lot of wisdom and experience in this room. Don't be shy about asking for ideas to help you manage students on your bus.

Thank you