

North Thurston School District Transportation is committed to operating the safest transportation system possible through good bus maintenance, continuous driver training, and appropriate student behavior. This component, appropriate student behavior, requires the help and cooperation of the students and you, the parent/guardian. Students and parents/guardians are expected to be familiar with the Student Bus Conduct Rules and Regulations that lists both the expectations and the consequences of inappropriate behavior on a school bus, as outlined in this document and on our website. The privilege of riding a school bus is offered to all qualifying students contingent upon the students following the Student Busing Conduct Rules and Regulations.

The bus driver is responsible to see that students abide by the Student Busing Rules and Regulations. It is expected that in most cases the driver will use informal means to effectively correct student misconduct. It is recognized that instances will arise when the driver will find it necessary to seek the help of parents and/or school officials in correcting specific problems.

Classroom conduct is the accepted behavior on a school bus. Classroom conduct, as used here is interpreted to mean:

- A. Following the driver's directions, remaining properly seated
- B. Keeping your hands and personal items to yourself
- C. Talking with other students in immediate vicinity only
- D. Students need to remember that since all grade levels may be riding the bus, conversation content should be structured accordingly.

Student Busing Conduct Rules and Regulations:

1. General Rules and Regulations

- A. The bus driver is in full charge of the bus and all students will obey the bus driver promptly and willingly
- B. Failure to follow bus rules and regulations will result in parent contact and possible loss of transportation services.
- C. Any exceptions to rules below, where applicable, must be approved by the District authorities.
- D. The specific student conduct expectations cited in this handbook apply when riding a North Thurston Public Schools Bus and/or Van.

2. Specific Rules and Regulations

- A. Student shall give their proper identity when requested by the bus driver. Failure to properly identify self or possession of another student's SMART TAG ID may result in up to a 5 day suspension from the bus.
- B. Students shall ride their regularly assigned bus. Students shall board and leave the bus at their regularly assigned stops. Any temporary change must be approved through the school who will issue the bus pass. WAC 392-145-060.

- C. Students shall sit in seats that may be assigned at the discretion of the bus driver.
- D. All kindergarten students must be met at the bus stop by an identified adult, unless a waiver has been completed and returned to the Transportation Department. A student who is not met and does not have a waiver will be brought back to the Transportation Department to await parent pick up.
- E. Students are expected to be outside and visible at the bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled bus arrival. Bus drivers are instructed not to wait for tardy students. Drivers do not honk the horn or call families to inform them of the arrival of the bus.
- F. Students shall not open the windows on a school bus a distance of more than six inches or to the line indicated on the window frame.
- G. Students shall not extend any part of their body out of the bus window or emergency exits at any time. Students shall refrain from throwing objects out the bus windows or on the bus floor.
- H. Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus while traveling to or from school without driver approval.
- I. The bus aisles shall be kept clear at all times.
- J. Students are not permitted to sit in the driver's seat at any time. WAC 392-145-031
- K. Students shall remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- L. Students shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner.
- M. When the bus is arriving or departing, students shall stand clear of the bus. A minimum of six (6) feet is recommended. Students shall not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- N. School bus drivers shall have the primary responsibility for the safety of passengers while they are boarding the school bus, while they are on the school bus, and while they are disembarking the school bus and crossing the roadway, if passengers must cross the road. WAC 392-145-060
- O. Private and school property at bus stops shall be respected at all times.
- P. Students will not take video or photographs while on the bus without the expressed permission from involved persons.
- Q. Students shall not smoke or light any materials on or around the bus.
- R. Students shall not have anything in their possession which may cause injury, such as but not limited to sticks, breakable containers, and any type of firearms, straps or pens extending from their clothing.
- S. Large objects shall not be transported on the school bus. This is in accordance of WAC 392-145-021. The following Orchestra and Band instruments are not able to be safely transported on the school bus by placing the instrument in or on the lap of the student or between the student's legs: bass trombone, tuba, percussion instruments, trombones in hard rectangle cases, tenor saxophones in hard rectangle cases, baritones, basses, or cellos. No instrument will be allowed to take up a seat position or extend into the aisle way of the bus.
- T. Students will keep all items in their book bag, backpack, or instrument case. Students are only allowed to have one backpack or book bag and one small

instrument case. No loose items will be allowed on the bus. Skateboards must be placed inside or secured to a backpack at all times. Any loose items that are in the aisle way will be confiscated by the driver and need to be picked up at the Transportation Department.

- U. Laser pointers, aerosol containers, explosive devices, and flammable substances are not permitted on the bus. (Explosive devices include ammunition, smoke bombs, stink bombs, and fireworks of any kind.)
- V. Students are not permitted to spray or use perfume, cologne, body spray, deodorant, lotions or other aromatic products while on the bus.
- W. Animals are not permitted on the bus with the exception of service animals.
- X. The use of loud, abusive or vulgar language, obscene gestures and images is prohibited. This includes the use of electronic devices such as music blue-tooth sound systems, phones and speakers. All electronic devices brought onto the school bus and used, must be used in accordance with the district's student responsible use guidelines for technology as outlined in this document.
- Y. Students shall observe silence upon the bus driver's request to include, but not limited to railroad crossings, freeway entrances, etc.
- Z. Emergency exit doors shall be used only in the case of emergencies and emergency exit drills. In the event of an actual emergency, emergency exit procedures shall be followed. Anyone exiting an emergency door for any reason other than an emergency may be suspended from all bus service for the remainder of the school year.
- AA. Parents or guardians of students damaging school buses shall be responsible for proper reimbursement to the North Thurston Public Schools.
- BB. Passengers in school buses equipped with seat belts shall be required to wear them properly adjusted whenever the school bus is in motion. WAC 394-145-021
- CC. Students shall cross the road only in front of the bus and only when the bus driver has given the signal that it is safe to cross. Students will refrain from using electronic or other distracting items while crossing.

SMART TAG CORRECTIVE PROCEDURES

Please keep in mind the following items regarding our SMART TAG ID program and corrective procedures that may accrue.

1. SMART TAG IDs must be scanned when boarding or departing a bus. This includes field trips, athletic trips and any other bus or van trip as required by the school district.
2. Failure to properly identify self or possession of another student's SMART TAG ID will result in disciplinary actions as outlined in this document.
3. SMART TAG ID badges are required to ride the bus. In order to foster increased student safety and security as well as to provide a more efficient process of loading

and unloading our buses, SMART TAG ID badges will be required for all riders. Additionally, in order to minimize the manual review of students who misplace or forget SMART TAG ID badges at home or school, those students possessing SMART TAG ID badges will be allowed to board the bus first.

4. SMART TAG ID badges will be issued once to every student in the North Thurston School District. If a new replacement card is needed, parents/guardians may request one using an on-line form, or by contacting their student's campus. Replacement cards will be \$3.00 per card.
5. Elementary students who have received 3 manual loadings by the driver for not having their tag over a period of 10 days shall be counseled by the driver. A notice may be sent to parents/guardians regarding the importance of the SMART TAG IDs. If the elementary student continues to not use their tag, parents/guardians and the school will be notified and they may lose their riding privileges for up to 5 days.
6. Middle and High School students who receive 3 manual loadings by the driver for not having their tag over a period of 10 days shall be counseled by the driver. A notice may be sent to parents and the school regarding the importance of the SMART TAG IDs. If the student continues to not use the tag, bus privileges may be suspended until they comply with the SMART TAG program.

Please see North Thurston website for additional FAQ's

Corrective Procedures

The following rules and regulations apply to students riding a bus:

Three formal procedures are established for the driver to follow in seeking to correct student misconduct: (1) Courtesy Notices; (2) Student Misconduct Report that may result in Suspension of Bus Riding Privileges; and, (3) Emergency Discipline Procedure. Related records will be maintained at the Transportation Office.

Step I: Courtesy Notice

When in the driver's opinion student's behavior is an area of concern and may be corrected with notification and assistance of parent/guardian, the driver will issue a Courtesy Notice. This will be considered a warning. The following procedure shall apply:

Inappropriate behavior will be reported on a Courtesy Notice and the driver will attempt to make phone contact with the parent/guardian. It will be sent home with the student and include instructions to the parent/guardian and student to sign and return the report the next school day. A space will be on the form that the parent/guardian may check and list their phone number if they wish to have the bus driver call them.

Step II: Student Misconduct Report. Up to a Five-Day Suspension of Bus Riding

The driver will telephone the parent as soon as possible. This first misconduct report will warrant up to a five-day (5) suspension of bus riding privileges. The driver will note on the Misconduct Report when the suspension will begin and end. A copy of the report will be sent home and the school will be notified. The parent/guardian has the right to appeal the suspension. He/she must notify the Transportation Department in writing within five (5) calendar days of his/her wish to appeal. An appeal is appropriate only when the parties cannot come to an agreeable solution. A copy of the report will be sent to the home and the school will be notified.

Step III: Student Misconduct Report. Up to Ten-Day Suspension of Bus Riding

The second Misconduct Report may warrant up to a ten-day (10) suspension of bus riding privileges. The parent/guardian has the right to appeal the suspension. He/she must notify the Transportation Department in writing within five (5) calendar days of his/her wish to appeal. An appeal is appropriate only when the parties cannot come to an agreeable solution. A copy of the report will be sent to the home and the school will be notified.

Step IV: Student Misconduct Report up to Thirty-Day Suspension of Bus Riding

The third Misconduct Report may warrant up to a thirty-day (30) suspension of bus riding privileges. The procedure described under Step III will be followed. The parent/guardian has the right to appeal the suspension. He/she must notify the Transportation Department in writing within five (5) calendar days of his/her wish to appeal. An appeal is appropriate only when the parties cannot come to an agreeable solution. A copy of the report will be sent to the home and the school will be notified.

Step V: Student Misconduct Report - School Year Suspension of Bus Riding

A fourth Misconduct Report may warrant a suspension of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year. The parent/guardian has the right to appeal the suspension. He/she must notify the Transportation Department in writing within five (5) calendar days of his/her wish to appeal. An appeal is appropriate only when the parties cannot come to an agreeable solution. A copy of the report will be sent to the home and the school will be notified.

Exceptions to Progressive Discipline Steps (Emergency Discipline Procedures)

Students shall not carry, or use any kind of pipe, cigar, cigarette, e-cigarette, or any other smoking or vapor equipment or material, nor shall a student chew or sniff tobacco products. Students shall not possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs,

tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or flammable substances. The student's bus riding privileges will be suspended for a minimum of five (5) days for the first offense.

Verbal abuse and/or threat or use of physical force directed toward a driver and/or student(s) may also result in a minimum of a five (5) day suspension of bus riding privileges for a first offense. The suspension will begin on the following school day or as soon as the parent or guardian is notified. Subsequent offenses shall result in longer suspensions.

Other exceptions include:

- Students who video or photograph without the expressed permission may be issued a bus suspension for up to 30 days and the video device may be confiscated to be released to a parent.
- When a student rides a school bus other than their regularly assigned bus without permission.
- When a student boards or leaves a school bus at an unassigned location without permission.
- When a student is found to be harassing, intimidating and/or bullying a student(s) and/or the school bus driver, as outlined in Policy 3207.
- When a student vandalizes and/or damages a school bus on the interior or exterior.

Any student who causes a major distraction to the driver which endangers the safety of all riders on the bus may be suspended from bus riding for up to thirty (30) school days.

Possession of a weapon or explosive devices will result in immediate emergency expulsion from bus riding. District policy, procedure, and state law will be followed in cases where a student is in possession of a weapon on a school bus.

A student who points a laser beam toward another student may be excluded from District transportation for up to thirty (30) school days. Should a student point a laser beam toward the school bus driver in a manner which could distract or impair the driver from operating the bus safely, the student will be excluded from District transportation for a minimum of thirty (30) days. Use of a laser pointer that affects a School Bus Driver is a Class "C" felony in Washington State. Such incidents will be referred to the School Resource Officer.

If the result of an incident is so serious that it causes injury, the student may be referred to the appropriate local law enforcement agency.

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