

School Bus Guidelines for Discipline

We are pleased to provide bus transportation to and from school, and extra-curricular activities as a service to the students of Saline Area Schools. Passenger and driver safety is the most important consideration concerning student ridership. Any conduct that distracts the driver's attention from the road threatens the safety of everyone on the bus. It is imperative that students conduct themselves in the best possible manner.

The bus driver is responsible for the bus and has the authority to control passenger conduct. All students are to cooperate with the driver. If a student fails to follow the bus rider rules and regulations, the driver will initiate disciplinary action. In most incidents this will begin by verbally requesting a change in behavior. If this is not successful, the driver will complete a disciplinary form which notifies the Building Administrator, or the Transportation Administrator that a problem has occurred. If suspension of bus privileges is necessary, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide transportation during the suspension.

Student bus behavior is to be consistent with all of the bus rider rules and regulations. If violations occur, the bus driver may administer discipline. In order to achieve safe transportation, it is important students, parents, drivers, and staff work together to promote orderly behavior and safe conditions on the school bus.

Saline Area Schools Buses are monitored with video surveillance cameras which can be used to help provide factual data to District administrators concerning disciplinary actions.

Violations to the bus rider rules and regulations shall be progressive

The driver should attempt to achieve cooperation through verbal warnings (this may include assigned seats, etc.). If there is no change in student behavior after verbal warning (s), or if the behavior threatens the safety of others or that of the driver, the bus driver will move to a formal written warning which may result in suspension of bus privileges.

On the bus discipline process:

1. **First Written Violation** – A written warning will be given to the student by a transportation driver or transportation supervisor. The student in turn will be required to have their parent sign the warning verifying they have received it. A copy of the warning will be sent to the building principal by the transportation department alerting them an incident has occurred. The signed notice from the parents/guardian must be returned to the driver the next morning when they ride the bus or transportation privileges' will be denied. Bus privileges will only be reinstated once the signed notice has been returned. There shall be no appeal to a written first violation.
2. **Second Written Violation** – A Written Warning will be given to the student by a transportation driver or supervisor. A copy will be sent to the student's building principal notifying them of the incident. The transportation department will also initiate direct contact with the parents/guardian. There shall be no appeal to a second written violation.

3. **Third Violation** – One day suspension from bus privileges. A notice that bus privileges will be suspended for one day will be given to the student by the bus driver, or transportation supervisor with a copy sent the school administrator and parents/guardian. There shall be no appeal for a one day suspension of bus privileges.

4. **Fourth Violation** – Three day suspension from bus privileges. A notice that bus privileges will be suspended for three days will be given to the student by the bus driver or transportation supervisor, with a copy sent the school administrator and student’s parent/guardian. There shall be no appeal for a three day suspension of bus privileges.

5. **Fifth Violation** – Five day suspension from bus privileges. A notice that bus privileges will be suspended for five days will be given to the student by the transportation supervisor or the student’s school administrator. Notice will be sent to the parent/guardian about the suspension of bus privileges. The parent/guardian may appeal the suspension. The first step in the appeal will be for the parents to request a conference with both the transportation supervisor and the student’s school administrator. This must be done within 3 days of notification of that was sent to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian are not satisfied with the decision by the transportation supervisor and student’ school administrator, they may further request review by the transportation director.

6. **Sixth Violation** – One full semester suspension of bus privileges. A notice that bus privileges will be suspended for one semester will be given to the student by the transportation supervisor or the student’s school administrator. Notice will be sent to the parent/guardian about the suspension of bus privileges. The parent/guardian may appeal the suspension. The first step in the appeal will be for the parents to request a conference with both the transportation supervisor and the student’s school administrator. This must be done within 3 days of parental notification. If the parent/guardian are not satisfied with the decision by the supervisor of transportation and students school administrator, they may further request review by the transportation director.

7. **Seventh Violation-** Suspension for the remainder of the school year from bus privileges. A notice that bus privileges will be suspended for the remainder of the school year will be given to the student by the transportation supervisor or the student’s school administrator. Notice will be sent to the parents/guardians about the suspension of bus privileges. The parents/guardian may appeal the suspension. The first step in the appeal will be for the parents to request a conference with both the transportation supervisor and the student’s school administrator. This must be done within 3 days of parental notification. If the parents/guardian are not satisfied with the decision by the manager of transportation and student’s school administrator, they may request review by the transportation director.

Violations, which can be verbal or written, will be issued due to behavior that interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of the bus. Continued violations may become suspensions of bus privileges if the behavior continues, or if the driver/transportation manager believes actions compromises passenger or driver safety. **Below are listed some examples of activity which could result in either type of violations:**

1. **Boarding or leaving the bus in an unsafe manner** – Failing to line-up properly at the bus stop. Students should be off the roadway. Pushing or shoving while boarding or exiting the bus.

2. **Consumption of food or beverages** – Eating and drinking are not permitted.
3. **Littering** – Scattering, discarding, or leaving refuse.
4. **Sitting improperly on the bus** – Changing an assigned seat without permission of the driver. Not staying seated until arriving at the final destination. Failing to sit as directed by the driver. Saving or reserving seats.
5. **Tampering with windows** – Lowering or raising windows without the driver's permission.
6. **Tardiness** – Failing to be at the bus stop at the appropriate time prior to and after school in the line-up.
7. **Unsafe riding practices** – Acting in a manner detrimental to the health or safe transportation of the student, passengers, or driver.

A suspension of transportation privileges is usually caused by more severe actions than listed above. These actions interfere with the safe operation of the bus.

Short or long term suspension of transportation privileges may happen for items listed below:

1. **Disruptive behavior** – Behaving in a manner which interrupts or interferes with the safe operation of the bus, i.e. making excessive noise, roughhousing or distracting the driver.
2. **Extending anything out of the windows** – Extending parts of the body, books, papers, etc. out of the bus windows.
3. **Bullying/harassment/verbal abuse** – Disturbing by teasing, pestering, or tormenting, including any verbal, electronic, or written intimidation because of person's race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or physical characteristic(s).
4. **Holding onto the outside of the bus in any manner** – Touching mirrors, fenders, bumpers, doors, etc. while stopped or moving.
5. **Improper crossing** – Crossing behind the bus (M.V.C. 257.1855 SEC.3), stopping in front or returning across the road in front of the bus. Reaching under the bus or the tires for any reason.
6. **Inappropriate use of emergency door** – Using the emergency door in a non-emergency situation without authorization from the driver.
7. **Insubordination/refusal to follow directions** – Failing to comply with a reasonable direction or instruction. Refusing to identify one's self.
8. **Physical aggressiveness** – Engaging in aggressive physical contact such as pushing, shoving, tripping, etc.
9. **Possession/use of tobacco products** – Possessing or smoking a cigarette or using tobacco products, such as smokeless tobacco.

10. **Vandalism or defacing the bus in any manner** – Writing on seats, cutting seats, etc.
11. **Tampering with any part of the bus** – Tampering with switches, doors, steering wheel, etc.
12. **Throwing objects** – Throwing objects in the bus, out of the bus, or at the bus driver or other passengers.
13. **Use of profanity** – Writing, saying, or gesturing in a manner which conveys an offensive, obscene or sexually suggestive message.
14. **Using undesignated stop** – Getting on or off the bus somewhere other than the student's designated bus stop without a note from a parent and permission from the driver.

In cases of severe misconduct, any of the stated steps may be omitted.

Long term suspension of transportation privileges will be enacted if the behavior is of an aggravated nature, continuous, or unlawful.

Because of the safety-sensitive nature of school bus transportation, the bus driver, in conjunction with the transportation supervisor and student's building administrator, is vested with discretion in the issuance of discipline, and in determining to suspend students from the bus. There shall be no appeal to a bus suspension of bus privileges not exceeding three (3) school days. In cases of suspension from transportation privileges in excess of three (3) school days, a parent or guardian may request an appeal. To make an appointment for a conference, the parent or guardian must contact the student's building administrator or transportation administrator within three (3) days, (with the exception of weekends) of issuance of the notice of suspension.