

GETTING TO SCHOOL SAFELY!

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PASSENGERS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES

Saco School Department
90 Beach Street
Saco, ME 04072

Riding the school bus is a *privilege*. Failure to adhere or conform to these rules and regulations may result in loss of school bus privileges.

Once a student boards the bus – and only at that time - does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the day.

A. Conduct of Students Prior to Boarding Bus (on the road and at school):

1. All pupils must be ready in the morning at the scheduled time for the bus to arrive at the “School Bus Stop”. They need to arrive 10 minutes early in winter conditions and 5 minutes early in summer, fall, and spring conditions to the bus stop. They need to be out of vehicles as the bus approaches not when it stops.
2. Students must stand off the roadway while waiting at their designated bus stops where they can be seen by the approaching bus.
3. Students shall conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting for the bus.
4. Students shall be courteous.
5. Students shall wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching or entering the bus. If you cross the road, you must do so in front of the bus after making sure the highway is clear, and having been directed by the driver to cross.
6. Students shall line up in an orderly, single-file manner to board the bus.
7. Pushing, shoving, or other annoyances, will not be allowed while boarding, leaving, or taking a seat on the bus.

B. Conduct of Students While on the School Bus:

Students should:

1. Student will observe classroom conduct and be under the guidance and control of the bus driver.
2. Students will take a seat quietly without disturbing others and remain seated until the bus is fully stopped.

3. Students will speak in a normal tone. Loud voices or yelling could momentarily divert the bus driver's attention and result in a serious accident.
4. Students will be courteous to the bus driver and other students. Disrespectful behavior shown to other students or the bus driver will not be tolerated.
5. The bus driver will assign seats. Move from one seat to another only by permission of the bus driver, and at a time when the bus is not in motion.
6. Pupils will remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear.

Students should not:

1. Students will not eat, chew gum or drink on the bus unless medically required and the bus driver gives permission.
2. Students will not use profanity, tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any controlled substance on the bus.
3. Students will not extend hands, arms or any part of the body out of the windows or doors.
4. Students will not throw any article from, into, or at the bus, bus driver, cars, or pedestrians. Spitting is not allowed.
5. Students will not shout out the bus windows at people or passing vehicles.
6. Students will not change seats while the bus is in motion.

Reimbursement of costs for any damage done to the bus, caused by students, will be the responsibility of the student's parent(s) or guardian.

Students are permitted to carry only objects that they can hold in their laps. The following items are not allowed due to safety concerns: skateboards, snowboards, large band equipment, large sports equipment, and large school projects. Also there are no cleats, roller blades or heelys to be worn on the bus. Weapons, knives, and explosives are not allowed on the bus.

C. Conduct of Students When Departing the Bus:

Students should:

1. Pupils shall remain seated until the bus stops completely, and then leave their seat to depart. Students crossing the road must do so in front of the bus after directions from the bus driver. They should cross at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus and only after looking to be sure that no traffic is approaching from either direction.
2. Students shall help look after the safety and comfort of smaller children.
3. Students shall be alert to danger signals from the driver.

4. Students shall report directly to the waiting area, playground, or cafeteria once they are dismissed from the bus in the morning.

Students should not:

1. Students will not be discharged at places other than the regular bus stop, at home or at the school, unless by proper written authorization from the parent and approval by the school administrator or Transportation Director.
2. Students will not be allowed to ride other buses unless there is a family emergency, (illness or death or when the parents are away from the home.) Students are not allowed to change buses for the purpose of going to a friend's home. Requests will only be permitted through written authorization of the transportation department, and only at times of emergency, otherwise students are expected to ride their regular buses.
3. Students will not loiter around the bus or run beside it when the bus is in motion.
4. Students will not throw balls, paper, rocks, snowballs or other objects while they are either on or off the school bus.
5. Students will not challenge the authority of the bus driver while entering or leaving the bus.

D. Responsibilities of the Bus Driver

The Bus Driver Will:

- Be in full charge of the bus and all riders while students are being transported to and from school.
- Enforce all rules and regulations adopted by the school authorities for the conduct of students riding the bus.
- Promptly report in writing any violations of these regulations to the Director of Transportation by using the school bus incident report form.

E. Transportation Guidelines

The school department has designed bus stops along an established bus route on main roads.

Distance shall be measured by the shortest publicly traveled way. Required walking distances to a designated bus stop may exceed guideline limits due to remote locations or locations on roads not suitable for bus traffic.

It shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure the safe commute of their child within the guideline distances or to the nearest bus stop.

F. State Law:

1. Students riding a bus having seat belts or booster seats must use the seat belt if they are assigned to a seat belt, as it is required by law to do so.

G. Non-Compliance:

1. Bus misbehavior will not be tolerated. A bus driver cannot safely drive the bus and watch each child along the bus route. *Distractions could cause serious accidents.*
 - **First Offense:** will be a written warning that must be signed by the parent and returned to the school office the following day. **Offences of a serious nature may require an immediate suspension.**
 - **Second Offense:** will be a phone call to the parent at home or at work; written report to parents to be signed and returned to the school office the next day.
 - **Third Offense:** will be a three-day suspension of bus riding privileges and a parent conference.
 - **Fourth Offense(s):** will be a one-week suspension of bus riding privileges; a required meeting with the student, his/her parents and the principal before bus privileges are resumed.
 - **Severe Clause:** depending on the severity of the infraction, a student may be removed from the bus indefinitely and referred to the Superintendent of Schools. The school administrator may skip steps depending on the individual case.

Prior to any suspension, the building administrator will notify the parent or guardian, stating the reason for and the duration of the suspension.

Saco School Department's responsibility is limited to the time a student is riding on the school bus and/or on school property.

2. The above regulations apply to all bus students who ride a bus regardless of age or grade level. Once a student loses his privilege to ride the bus, he/she will be under suspension from riding all buses.
3. Bus rules apply for riding to and from school, or for activities requested by the various schools during the school year and are applicable to all who ride on the school bus.

H. Use of Video Cameras in Transportation Vehicles

1. In an effort to keep to minimum passenger behavior violations, video camera(s) will be used to monitor passenger behavior during transport to and from school and on extra curricular trips. When the resulting videotapes are used as a basis for discipline, parents/guardians, will be notified, but due to confidentiality, will not be permitted to view the content of said video. Students in violation of school conduct codes shall be disciplined in accordance with established policy and administrative guidelines, and school practices.
2. Bus slips will continue to be given for any inappropriate behavior on the bus.

I. Other Helpful Information

School Closings and Cancellations

In the event that school will be canceled or delayed, notification will usually be given no later than 6:00 a.m. to the local radio and TV stations. The radio and TV stations will be notified by 11:00 a.m. for an early dismissal announcement. The Saco School Department will also send out an announcement via the SchoolMessenger Alert system.

Bus Evacuation Drills

Bus evacuation drills will be conducted in the fall at each school-by-school bus drivers and school personnel. This drill will include all students and school personnel.