

Principal/Vice Principal Guide to School Vehicle Discipline





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Background

Each day in Ontario, over 800,000 students are transported to school on over 19,000 school purpose vehicles.

Student safety on school purpose vehicles is imperative to getting students to school on time and ready to learn.

As part of the 2015 Auditor General's Report on Transportation, a key recommendation emerged relating school bus discipline:

Recommendation #8: To improve student transportation safety, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with school boards and transportation consortia, should develop consistent safety policies for safe policies for safe transport of students and for dealing with behavioral issues on the bus.

As a result, the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (O.A.S.B.O.) Transportation Committee established a working group to create a Principal/Vice Principal Guide to School Bus Discipline.

This guide is a result of the OASBO Transportation Committee's work. It has been designed to support School Administrators with student transportation services at their school and provide them with a resource to assist them in developing a safe and positive environment for their students while riding a ride school bus.



Glossary of Terms:

- School Principal
 - School Principal or Principal-delegated school staff. Includes acting school Principal.
- Parent
 - Refers to the parent, guardian or person in charge of a particular student.
- Bus Operator
 - Refers to the school bus company and office staff.
- Bus Driver
 - The individual employed by the Bus Operator to drive the school bus.
- School Bus
 - Refers to any school vehicle used to transport students to and from school ie., school buses, school vans, taxis and mini vans
- Misconduct
 - Misconduct refers to student behaviour and/or conduct that violates the school code of conduct and thus the school bus code of conduct. Further referred to as an incident.
- BPIP
 - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
- Student Safety Plans
 - Specific plans created at the school Board level that detail particular plans relating to individual student safety.
- Progressive Discipline
 - Is a process for dealing with undesired behaviour. The primary purpose is to create opportunity for improvement through correction.
- Transportation Consortium
 - An organization funded by school boards who's responsibility is to procure, arrange and facilitate all aspects of student transportation within a defined geographic region.



Introduction:

A safe and accepting learning environment is essential for student achievement and well-being.

The school bus should be seen as an extension of the school environment. Actively promoting and supporting appropriate student behaviour contributes to a safe, inclusive and accepting learning and teaching environment. Principals and bus drivers play a key role in maintaining a positive school environment during the student's time on a school bus.

The provincial [Code of Conduct](#) sets clear provincial standards of behavior. These standards of behavior apply to students whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school related events or activities and in other circumstances that could have an impact on school climate.

Appropriate behavior on the school bus is an important part of school bus safety. Students who are deemed eligible by their school board to receive transportation on a school bus receive service as a privilege, not a right.

Open lines of communication between the bus driver and school administrators are especially crucial when responding to incidents that could have a negative impact on the school climate. Ministry of Education, Ontario



The purpose of this resource is to:

- To provide school board administrators a guide to assist them in creating and maintaining a safe environment for their students on school buses by managing student behaviour
- Provide school board administrators with a consistent approach to managing student behaviour on school buses
- Reinforce the necessity that students, staff and bus drivers have a safe and positive experience while they are on the bus
- Provide direction on the implementation on Progressive Discipline when there is an incident on a bus
- Reinforce that school and consortium staff, Bus Operators and Bus Drivers, students and parents have a responsibility to work together to establish a positive and safe climate on school buses
- Explain the importance of having a student code of conduct and Progressive Discipline apply to school buses

This resource is intended to be used to:

- Help establish a positive, safe climate on the bus
- Communicate expectations for staff, students and parents in order to maintain and sustain a positive, safe climate on the bus
- Outline how the School Code of Conduct should be applied to the bus
- Guide in the investigation of infractions that occur on the bus, and the implementation of progressive discipline
- Support existing policies, regulations, procedures and resources related to transportation and safety

This resource addresses:

- The development of a positive, safe environment on buses
- The roles and responsibilities for bus safety
- The use of Bullying Prevention and Intervention on the bus
- The effective use of Progressive Discipline in response to an incident on a bus
- The use of proper investigation when addressing an incident on a bus
- Support for students with special needs who ride the bus
- The use of self-regulation to support student behaviour on the bus
- Strategies for engaging and informing parents in the process



Roles and Responsibilities for School Bus Safety:

There are many stakeholders in School Bus Safety and they are all required to adhere to the policies and procedures set out by their School Board and/or Transportation Consortia.

PRINCIPAL OR VICE PRINCIPAL

- Be responsible for student's behavior while they're travelling on the bus including arrival and loading at the school
- Communicate to students and parents that the School Code of Conduct applies to the school bus
- Investigate incidents of student misconduct or safety concerns
- Ensure that progressive discipline is applied to ensure a safe environment on the school bus
- Foster a positive, supportive relationship with the bus drivers
- Utilize resources available including consortia, school boards, peers and bus operators
- Ensure that all school buses have a designated seating plan for students (see appendix C)
- Promote that the bus is the driver's workplace and therefore should be free from violence and harassment

BUS DRIVER

- Drive the school bus safely
- Be courteous and professional at all times when dealing with students, members of the school community and parents
- Consistently enforce rules and expectations set out for students
- Complete behaviour documentation in a timely manner
- Foster a positive, supportive relationship with school administration

PARENTS

- Be responsible for student safety and conduct prior to pick up and after departure from the bus
- Recognize that student transportation is a privilege, not a right
- Progressive Discipline may be suspended if expectations are not met
- Cooperate with the principal, bus driver, bus operator and consortium to ensure that their child conducts himself or herself in an appropriate manner on the bus
- Reinforce with their child the expectations for safe behaviour on the bus based on the School Code of Conduct and board/consortia policies and procedures
- Support the implementation of Discipline in response to an incident on the bus
- Pay for damages resulting from vandalism and/or willful damage by their child to the school bus should the need arise
- Remind students about respecting private and personal property when waiting at a consortia designated stop
- Be courteous and respectful to the bus driver at all times. The parent is responsible for raising any concerns with the principal/vice principal or consortia staff not directly with the bus driver

- Notify the school of any situation occurring at a stop or on the bus that may have compromise student safety
- Be aware of their child's bus route number and bus company name
- Recognize that the bus is the driver's workplace and therefore should be free from violence and harassment

STUDENTS

- Respect other people's property and belongings while waiting for the bus
- Treat the driver with respect and follow his or her instructions
- Be courteous and respectful to others on the bus at all times
- Act appropriately in a manner that does not endanger the safety of themselves or others including:
 - Not engaging in any activity that interferes with the safe operation of the bus
 - Remaining seated at all times, facing forward
 - Keeping hands, arms, feet, head and belongings inside the vehicle at all times
 - Avoiding distracting or speaking to the bus driver except in the case of emergency
 - Refraining from inappropriate behaviour on the bus, e.g., throwing items, swearing, fighting, bullying, eating or drinking
 - Not bringing alcohol, drugs or weapons onto the bus
 - Not touching safety equipment or emergency exits unless there is an emergency
- Be responsible to the principal or vice principal for their conduct on the bus
- Be liable for any damage done deliberately to the bus

TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIA

- Provide safe and efficient transportation services
- Have policies, procedures and safety measures available and communicated to parents
- Organize safety programs to promote awareness and bus safety and conduct on the bus
- Maintain contact with the bus operator and principals or vice principals to ensure safety
- Support bus drivers and schools in maintaining student conduct on the bus
- Respond to all parental and school based enquiries and requests in a professional manner

BUS OPERATOR

- Work co-operatively and foster a positive, supportive relationship with the principal or vice principal, parents and consortium when disputes or problems arise
- Audit bus driver performance periodically or at the request of the consortium
- Provide ongoing professional development to bus drivers with respect to safe driving, customer service and/or handling challenging situations
- Utilize resources available including consortia and school boards



School Code of Conduct Should Promote:

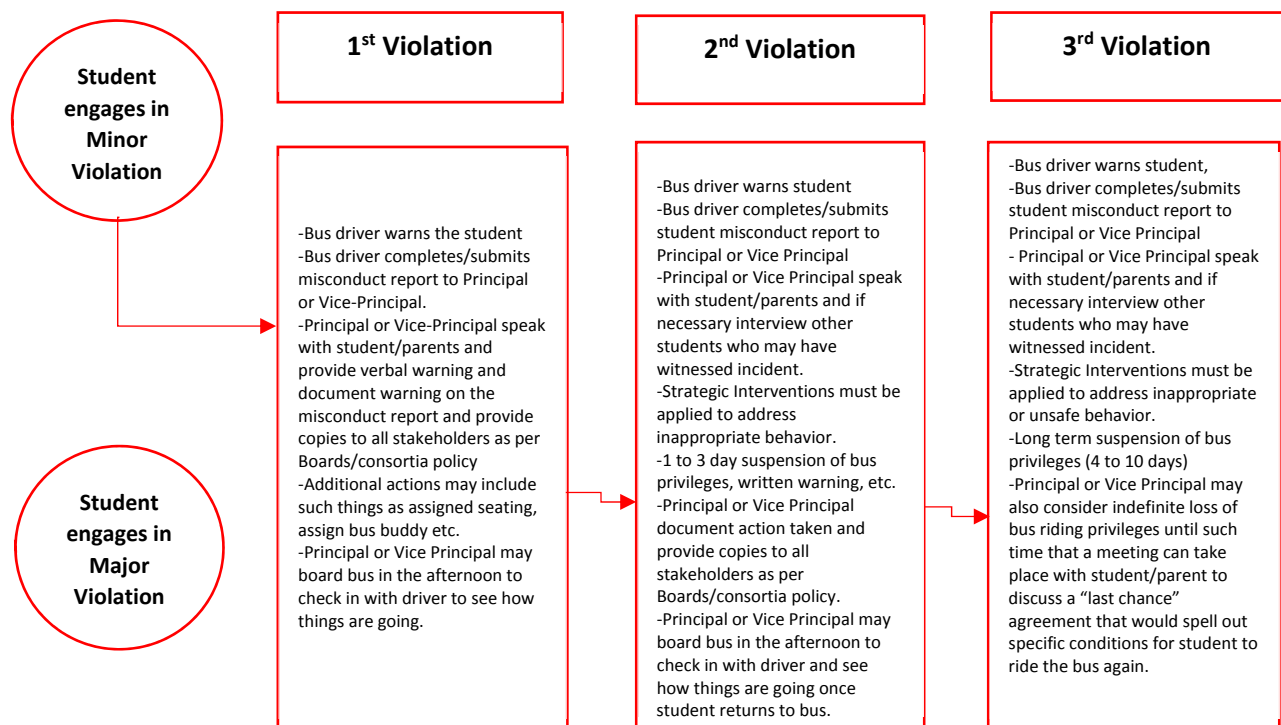
- the safety of students, drivers, school staff and board staff on the bus
- positive and appropriate behaviour while on the bus
- prohibiting the use of alcohol and illegal drugs
- the prevention of bullying on the bus
- an environment of equity and inclusiveness on the bus
- the use of progressive discipline to address inappropriate student behaviours on the bus

Progressive Discipline

Principals are encouraged to review and adopt common progressive discipline practices in managing student behaviour on the bus. These procedures should be in line with their respective boards/consortia policies and their school code of conduct. It is important that parents are aware of any issues on the school bus and they understand that their child could ultimately lose their transportation privileges.

The purpose of progressive discipline, is to support a shared vision and ensure a common practice that encourages positive behaviour and promotes healthy relationships, growth and positive development among all students. This process involves all staff taking proactive, individualized and progressive measures when dealing with discipline. This process is presented in a step-by-step manner. However, it doesn't preclude the ability of staff to repeat a step, if for example, there has been a time-lag since the last incident, or to move directly to a serious consequence if the incident is significant, e.g., the students behaviour has put the safety of others in jeopardy.

Each School Board has their own progressive discipline process. Below are two examples of a progressive discipline process:





Creating a Safe, Positive Environment on the Bus

A positive school environment or climate can be defined as “the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm” ([Safe Schools Action Team Report, 2006](#)).

THE FOLLOWING ARE IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A POSITIVE, SAFE ENVIRONMENT ON THE BUS:

- Healthy relationships are promoted among all those who ride the bus
- Everyone feels safe, welcomed, accepted and included
- Equity and diversity is honoured and respected
- Students are encouraged to be leaders and positive role models
- School and consortia staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop and sustain a positive safe environment on the bus
- Expectations for positive, safe behaviour are clearly communicated, modelled and followed

STRATEGIES TO FOSTER A SAFE, POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT ON THE BUS

The following outlines suggestions for fostering a safe, positive environment on the bus:

- Communicate the expectations to students, school and consortia staff and parents on a regular basis ie. Newsletters, website etc. Consider having the information available in languages other than just English.
- Expand and apply the school based bullying program on the bus.
- The Safe Schools Plan should include how a positive school climate can be developed and sustained on the bus ie. bullying prevention.
- Support and promote your School Board and/or consortia's safety programs and ensure parents are aware of all available resources related to the program ie. [First Rider video](#) and [Bus Evacuation video](#)
- Seek to understand the potential reasons for student misbehaviour on the bus in order to help determine the most appropriate progressive discipline intervention
- Work with bus driver to create and implement the bus seating plan for all students (see Appendix C)
- Assign leadership roles to students, e.g., bus buddies, safety patrollers when appropriate (see Appendix B)
- School administration introduce a safety patroller program for their busing (see Appendix B)
- Implement a variety of preventative progressive discipline proactive strategies
- Build positive relationships with students and parents, and working in partnership to address behavioural issues on the bus

- 
- Foster the development of self-regulation strategies for students as a proactive measure. Provide students with the self-regulation tools they need to successfully ride the bus and facilitate their use, e.g., allowing the student to wear noise cancelling headphones etc.
 - Ensure that staff provide appropriate supervision while loading and unloading the bus and respond to and report to a principal or vice principal concerning behaviour
 - While supervising, staff should model appropriate, positive behaviours. Examples include:
 - Addressing situations from a place of calm, care and support
 - Noticing and recognizing desired behaviour
 - The principal or vice principal may use Restorative Practice to help resolve issues, including using the Restorative Practice questions
 - When applying progressive discipline, the principal or vice principal may wish to consult with support staff, e.g., the Special Education teacher, to determine which intervention will best help the student understand the consequences of his or her actions, and determine how his or her behaviour will improve in the future
 - Parents should understand how the School Code of Conduct and Progressive Discipline were applied to address the incident that occurred on the bus
 - Pertinent information is documented

THE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TO SUPPORT A POSITIVE, SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Restorative Practice is a way of “being” that helps strengthen relationships to support student well-being and achievement. Restorative Practice should be used as a proactive way to build a positive, safe climate, and as a responsive way to help maintain, and restore community when needed.

Restorative Practice is based upon nine interconnected elements. These elements provide the foundation to cultivate caring and healthy communities. The elements include healthy relationships; voice; fair process; structure and support; safety; empathy and perspective; taking ownership; learning; and, belonging and interdependence. These elements help shape a positive climate at school and on the bus.

Restorative Practice questions can be used as a responsive strategy when there is an incident on the bus. The Restorative Practice questions are designed to elicit the essential elements of bias-free progressive discipline. The questions provide a framework that may be used to lead a conversation that examines what went wrong, what the impact was, and how to move forward in a positive manner.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED WHEN THINGS GO WRONG:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?



THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED WHEN SOMEONE HAS BEEN HARMED:

- What were you thinking when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Self Regulation: Understanding Student Behaviour

A student's behaviour can be affected by excessive stress due to factors such as lack of sleep, sensitivity to noise, and conflict with others. How stress impacts a student varies, as does how the student may self-regulate in order to achieve a state of calm and alertness. Signs of stress behaviour might include increased impulsivity, difficulty ignoring distractions and/or trouble listening. A student's stress behaviour may be heightened while he or she rides on the bus as a result of factors such as the noise on the bus or the motion of the bus.

When dealing with stress behaviour, it is important to help the student:

- learn what it feels like to be calm;
- figure out what is causing the stress
- identify and implement strategies or activities to reduce the stressors, and help him or her get back to calm, e.g., use noise-cancelling headphones while riding the bus (Merit Centre, 2018)

Bullying Prevention and Intervention on the Bus

The Ontario Ministry of Education has provided a definition of bullying that is to be used by all schools (Refer to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, 2012 for the Ministry of Education). This definition is also helpful in making distinctions between what is conflict and what is bullying. It is important to reinforce that behaviour expectations also apply to buses. In addition, it must be clearly stated that bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on the bus, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

The BPIP is an important component of a whole school approach that supports student well-being and to fostering a positive school climate. Each school must develop a BPIP in consultation with students, staff, parents, and community partners, and then post the BPIP on the school website. Since the BPIP needs to include the bus, it is important that data about incidents on the bus be used to inform the BPIP. Data about incidents that occur on the bus can be gathered from the Transportation Communication Reports and/or the use of student focus groups. This data should be used to monitor the success of the preventative strategies and interventions.



The BPIP outlines goals to address and prevent bullying. An example of a BPIP goal that would apply to the bus is as follows:

THIS GOAL WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE FOLLOWING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES:

- Students are taught how to identify their stressors
- Students are provided with strategies to address their stressors to allow them to be calm, alert and ready to learn
- Students are provided with self-regulation tools that apply to the classroom, and the bus, e.g., noise-cancelling head phones or a “fidget ball”

Schools highlight the work they are doing in bullying prevention and intervention during events such as during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, and Pink Shirt Day. It is important to include activities that are applicable to bullying that may occur on the bus, e.g., an “Upstander” Program for the bus during these events.

An important aspect of the BPIP is the inclusion of mechanisms to report bullying. The BPIP should include how students report bullying that occurs on the bus, e.g., reporting bullying to a trusted adult (parent, teacher, principal or vice principal, support staff, police liaison officer) or by using the “Report Bullying Now” button on the school website. The BPIP should also reinforce that the adults who ride the bus, e.g., bus drivers and educational assistants, are required to report incidents of bullying to administration.

THE BPIP SHOULD ALSO OUTLINE HOW THE SCHOOL RESPONDS TO BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL AND ON THE BUS BY:

- Ensuring the safety of all involved
- Responding to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate
- Conducting a school-based investigation
- Schools are required to provide support for those impacted as a result of an incident. This includes the person(s) who has been harmed, the person(s) who caused harm, and the person(s) who has witnessed harm.

PLANS PUT IN PLACE FOR STUDENTS IMPACTED BY AN INCIDENT NEEDS TO INCLUDE SUPPORTS SUCH AS:

- Furthering school-level support such as connection to a caring adult, and having that person check-in with the student on a regular basis
- Implementing board-level supports such as social work or psychological services (with consent)
- Preferential seating on the bus



Applying Mitigating, Other and Human Rights Factors

When implementing progressive discipline, schools must comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Education Act. Given that the bus is an extension to the school, this expectation also applies when addressing incidents on the bus. Please refer to the Ontario Human Rights Code ([Link to OHRC](#)).

Mitigating and Other Factors

As stated in the Education Act, a principal or vice principal need to take into account mitigating and other factors when implementing progressive discipline in response to an incident at school or on the bus. Considering mitigating and other factors is an important step to help the principal or vice principal better understand the student's behaviour, and how to effectively address the behaviour.

Mitigating Factors Include:

- The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour
- The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour
- The pupil's continuing presence in the school or on the bus does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person

Other Factors Include:

- The pupil's history
- Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil
- Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment
- How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education
- The age of the pupil
- In the case of a pupil for whom an Individual Education Plan (IEP) has been developed:
 - whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,
 - whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct



Supporting Students with Special Needs who Ride the Bus

It's important that all stakeholders ie. Board staff, schools, special education staff, bus operators and consortia, parents and students are involved in the establishment of a school safety plan for transportation.

The bus driver plays a key role in the transportation of students with special needs and therefore it is critical that they:

- Are familiar with the individual needs and accommodations of each student they transport including being familiar with the details of any student safety plans
- Implement appropriate interventions identified in the Student Safety Plan
- Be familiar with appropriate responses and /or actions that should be taken to support students
- Maintain regular, timely communication with School Administration
- Understand the “triggers” identified in the Student Safety Plan that initiate unwanted behaviour

Triggers Can Include:

- Unexpected or loud noises on the bus
- Changes in the type of bus or the bus route
- Change in staff, e.g., the bus driver or EA
- A delayed bus departure
- Interactions with other students
- Changes in routines at school or at home
- Changes to the bus seating plan (see appendix C)
- Inclement weather

Drivers should be prepared to deal with incidences while transporting students with special needs. If an EA is assigned to the bus, he or she will take the lead. Other strategies include:

- Referring to the information in the Student Safety Plan for next steps
- Speak calmly to the student and review the bus protocol
- If there is a high level of concern, pullover, identify the student and the issue, if necessary call dispatch for further direction which may include returning to school or calling 911

Transferrable Strategies from the Classroom to Support Students with Special Needs on the bus:

- Have reinforcement or sensory items available, e.g., music played through headphones and/or comfort toys, story etc.
- Strategic seating on the bus, e.g., a seating plan for the students (see Appendix C)
- Quiet setting when travelling on the bus, e.g., the use of noise cancelling headphones
- Speak calmly/quietly
- Maintain routine whenever possible



UNDERSTANDING SELF REGULATION ON THE BUS

Student behaviour can be viewed as a response to stressors that occur in five domains. The following are descriptions of the domains:

- Biological Domain - Maintaining optimal alertness
- Emotional Domain - Regulating feelings and moods
- Cognitive Domain - Mentally processing different kinds of sensory information
- Social Domain - Understanding social situations and cues
- Pro-social Domain - Caring for others by demonstrating traits such as empathy and honesty

For each of the domains, there are strategies that can be used to support students while riding the bus. See appendix A for further detail.

Conducting an Investigation of an Incident on the Bus

An investigation is conducted by the principal or vice principal when there has been a violation of the School Code of Conduct as it applies to transportation. This includes when a student engages in behaviour that impacts negatively on the school bus.

COMMON INVESTIGATION STRATEGIES INCLUDE :

- read the bus driver's misconduct report to better understand what happened on the bus
- if necessary speak to the bus driver, interview witnesses, and the student(s) involved in the incident
- compile all available resources ie. video footage, bus monitor statements, safety patrol statements, GPS data etc.
- ensure that the investigation process is fair, thorough and complete
- ensure neutrality and procedural fairness
- gather and document the facts, not opinions
- be flexible, especially when presented with new information that impacts on the original decision
- use progressive discipline to focus on corrective measures, not punitive
- consider Mitigating Factors, Other Factors and Human Rights Factors
- Consult Superintendent or designate, and/or other support personnel, when necessary
- follow Board and Ministry legislation, including policies, regulations, procedures and protocols
- involve the police regarding possible criminal activity (refer to the School Board/Police Protocol)
- communicate the outcome and the application of progressive discipline, using the bus driver's misconduct report, to the student(s), parents and appropriate school and consortia while maintaining the required confidentiality



Engaging Parents when Creating Safe Environments for the Bus

In order to help parents, understand and support bus safety and progressive discipline, staff should engage parents in the follow ways:

- Foster relationships, promoting and supporting positive interactions with all stakeholders
- Promote a positive school bus environment by ensuring safety, inclusion and respect for all school and community members
- Be informed of School Board and consortia policy regarding relevant issues that pertain to a parent's concern, e.g., if a parent has a question about safety procedures for the bus, the principal or vice principal can refer him or her to transportation policies
- Use Board/consortia resources that will help resolve issues with parents; both human and material resources, e.g., connecting with the Superintendent/consortia staff
- Manage situations that occur on the bus in a timely manner
- Have meaningful interactions with bus drivers and parents that demonstrates that you are interested in their concerns and questions
- Ensure that you are visible and accessible, and that you fully communicate expectations for bus safety to students and parents
- Communicate clearly and frequently the expectations for bus safety ie. via phone conversations, email, social media, Twitter, school website, etc.
- Ensure that parents know that your goal is to help every child follow the expectations in the School Code of Conduct as it pertains to bus safety. Refer to the School's Code of Conduct, and let parents know that it applies to "all stakeholders", including parents

Informing Parents about Expectations for Bus Safety

It is important that parents work collaboratively to support the expectations outlined in the School Code of Conduct, including bus safety and acceptable behaviour of students on the bus. Principals or vice principal shall inform parents about their responsibility to follow the School Code of Conduct and expectations outlined by each consortia. Parents should be encouraged to support and reinforce the safety/behaviour expectations that apply to their children.

PARENTS

- are responsible for their children's safety and conduct prior to boarding the bus
- and after disembarking the bus, this includes while waiting at the bus stop
- shall advise and explain to their children the rules of bus safety and for appropriate behaviour as identified in the School Code of Conduct



Expectations of Students While on the Bus

- Listen to the bus driver; he or she is in control of the bus
- Co-operate with the bus driver when asked to do so
- Try to speak quietly. Excessive noise, loud singing and shouting can be a distraction to the bus driver and to the safe operation of the bus
- Remain seated at all times. Sit facing forward until the vehicle comes to a stop. Students who do not sit properly in the seats may be seriously injured
- Keep belongings, including backpacks stowed under the seat or on your lap. Do not place items in the aisle. It is important to keep the aisles clear to prevent tripping, and to allow for a safe evacuation of the bus if required
- Do not bring large/bulky items on the bus, e.g., sports equipment
- Do not engage in the use of abusive language, profanity, yelling, throwing items (inside and out of the bus), smoking, fighting or any other activity that may interfere in the safe operation of the vehicle and/or endanger the safety of others
- Do not engage in any activity that may interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle
- No eating or drinking. This may pose a choking hazard or it may impact on the safety of a student with an allergy
- Keep arms, legs and head inside the vehicle at all times
- Do not attempt to distract other vehicles on the road
- Do not willfully damage the bus in any way. Students and/or their parents will be responsible for restitution
- Unsafe behaviour may result in loss of bus privilege

Appendix A: Self Regulation: Description of the 5 Domains



Biological Domain

Some of the stressors in the Biological Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:

- Illness
- Insufficient sleep
- The environment (too much/too little noise/light/temperature/visual stimulus)
- Food choices (skipping meals, fat/sugar/salt content)

To support students' self-regulation in the Biological Domain while riding the bus, schools may:

- Adjust the environment, e.g., assigned seating, the use of noise cancelling headphones
- and/or a fidget tools
- Encourage parents to ensure that their child has adequate sleep, is physically active
- and eats healthy meals

Emotional Domain

Some of the stressors in the Emotional Domain that may impact a student's behavior on the bus include:

- A change in routine, e.g., a new bus driver
- A conflict with a friend, peer and/or a person in authority

To support students' self-regulation in the Emotional Domain while riding the bus, schools may:

- Create consistent structures and routines, e.g., an assigned seat on the bus
- Prepare students for any changes in routines
- Support the student when managing negative emotions
- Encourage parents to allow their child to take responsibility, when appropriate, and establish
- consistent and developmentally appropriate boundaries and expectations for their child

Cognitive Domain

Some of the stressors in the Cognitive Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:

- Difficulty focusing due to a sensitivity to environmental factors, e.g., the bus is too loud

- A learning challenge, e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Depression or Anxiety Disorder
- Difficulty following multi-step instructions

To support students' self-regulation in the Cognitive Domain while riding the bus, schools may:

- Adjust the environment, e.g., assigned seating, the use of noise cancelling headphones and/or a fidget tool
- Provide positive feedback and reinforcement when students behave appropriately on the bus
- Offer clear structure and rules, and “chunk” expectations into simpler steps
- Encourage parents to support their child's use of positive self-talk, allow their child to take ownership for his or her decisions, and support their child in taking an active role in repairing mistakes and solving problems

Social Domain

Some of the stressors in the Social Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:

- The inability to cooperate with others
- Dealing with unfamiliar social interactions
- A learning challenge, e.g., ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Depression or Anxiety Disorder

To support students' self-regulation in the Social Domain while riding the bus, schools may:

- Embed social and emotional learning into daily routines, including riding the bus
- Foster and model healthy and meaningful relationships
- Support students in identifying their emotions, and promote positive emotional responses
- Encourage parents to discuss their child's feelings and possible reasons for those feelings, provide opportunities for their child to engage in positive social interactions with others, and support a healthy diet, adequate sleep and exercise with their child

Pro-Social Domain

Some of the stressors in the Pro-Social Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:

- The stage of development of empathy
- The use of punishment rather than the use of bias-free progressive discipline
- Differing messages on maintaining safe, inclusive and caring environments, e.g., condoning or ignoring bullying behaviours

To support students' self-regulation in the Pro-Social Domain while riding the bus, schools may:

- Use of bias-free progressive discipline and Restorative Practices for incidents that occur on the bus
- Incorporate bullying prevention and interventions strategies that are applicable to the bus
- Encourage empathy, active listening, leadership and the importance of helping one another

- 
- Encourage parents to promote kindness and empathetic behaviour towards others with their child, and help their child to consider the feelings and needs of both self and others and to use personal strengths to help others

Appendix B



SAFETY PATROLLERS – BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOLS

Why?

- Assist in ensuring students stay safe on the bus/ looking out for students in case a dangerous situation occurs
- Students have the opportunity to be role models for their peers/serves as a leadership opportunity

Safety Patrol Mentors

- Important that mentors participate in September training in order to answer safety patrol related questions
- Host regular Patrol meetings to discuss challenges and reward students
- Create a notice board to display shift schedules, upcoming meetings and events
- Required to show a CAA refresher video (foot and bus have separate videos) to patrollers sometime in February or March

Selection of Safety Patrollers

- Recruitment during the months of May and June for the following school year
- Consider running a patroller information session or booth at school
- Shadowing of current safety patrollers during May/June (use pins instead of vests to alert students they are “patrollers in training”, patrollers gain experience and decide if it’s for them)
- Senior patrollers present experience at the end of the year assembly
- Helpful if patrollers are assigned to one of the first stop in the AM and one of the last stops in the PM
- Ask for volunteers and reach out to other reliable students
- Consider having a “lead” patroller of the three assigned to the bus
- What makes an ideal patroller? Students that are responsible, polite and lead by example.

Safety Patrol Training in September

- Patrollers must be fully trained in order to be covered by OSBIE

Bus Patrols (front, middle and rear patroller)

- 
- *Encourage students to get to know all students riding the bus*
 - *Extra eyes and ears for the driver while the bus is in motion (driver's first priority should be driving safely)*
 - *Assist children getting on/off bus – assist younger children with steps, checking underneath the bus, ensure students don't walk in front of the bus and/or anywhere within the danger zone, ensure students are lining up in single file*
 - *Be aware that kindergarten students may fall asleep*
 - *Encourage students to get to know parents*
 - *Students know where the radio, first aid kit and fire extinguishers are*
 - *Reminders safety patrollers can give - ensure aisles clear, nothing is ever thrown out the window, students remain seated, keep volume in check - if ignored inform the driver*
 - *Assigned positions of patrollers need to be adjusted if there are less than 3*
 - *Only the front patroller should talk to the driver*

Walking Patrols (street, driveway and school pick up and drop off points)

- *Assist with the "kiss and rides"*
- *Two students need to be at each crossing point*
- *Patrollers keep students from entering roadways until it is safe*
- *They are **not** to stop or direct traffic*
- *Extra eyes and ears at crossing points and driveways*
- *Always remain on sidewalks and never cross students*
- *Remind classmates of rules*

How Can You Keep Patrollers Motivated Throughout the Year?

- *Supervisors recognize top patrollers in their school*
- *Surprise incentives or rewards for a patroller or team of patrollers (patroller of the month, or team of patrollers of the month/year)*
- *Patroller membership card used to get free entry to school events (dances)*
- *Safety messages said by the patrollers on the morning announcements*
- *Thank you cards*
- *CAA website has other low cost ideas through the school log in*

Appendix C



SCHOOL BUS SEATING PLANS

Considerations for effective school bus seating plans

School bus seating plans can be effective tools to promote safety and behavior management. School bus seating plans are not mandatory, but your school and/or bus driver may recommend that a seating plan be implemented.

Based on practices observed and feedback collected, some common practices and ideas are provided below.

Should you decide to implement a seating plan, here are some ideas:

- The Principal or designate is ultimately responsible for the seating plan, but the best and most effective plan will be developed collaboratively between school staff and the regular bus driver.
- “Peel and stick” labels can be affixed to the inside ceiling of the bus with student names to mark seats.

Types of seating plans:

- Develop the seating plan to match the **afternoon bus stop locations** where students get off at the end of the day. This can be done by using the bus assignment report in the School Portal. You can **assign “stop buddies”** (older students) based on this method. This allows for a mix of ages sitting together throughout the bus – which is preferable in case of an emergency.
- Develop the seating plan with **all JK/SK’s at the front** of the bus. If this is done, **have responsible senior student sit in the front passenger side seat** – in the event that the driver is incapacitated during an emergency, the senior student can assist the youngest riders.
- Develop the seating plan with **students with Epi-Pen’s at the front** of the bus.

Seating plans and bus evacuation methods:

- Consider the school bus evacuation training when developing your seating plan as you will likely want to ensure that there is a mix of student ages and abilities located throughout the bus. There are three main types of evacuation:
 - Rear Evacuation – all passengers and the driver exit from the emergency door at the back of the bus;
 - Front Evacuation – all passenger and the driver exit at the front door of the bus;



- o Split Evacuation – passengers sitting in the middle row and behind exit the emergency door at the back of the bus while the other passengers and driver exit at the front of the bus.
- Your school bus company will contact the school each year to arrange bus evacuation training with your students.

Resources:

- Layout sheet of a typical 72 passenger bus with two worksheets (2 kids per seat (7-8) and 3 kids per seat (JK-6)).

3 to a Seat Layout

Driver's Area			Door Area					
Row							Row	
1							1	
2							2	
3							3	
4							4	
5							5	
6							6	
7							7	
8							8	
9							9	
10							10	
11							11	
12	this row only 2 to a seat					this row only 2 to a seat	12	
			Emergency Exit					
Seating Guidelines: JK-6 3 to a seat, 7-8 2 to a seat								
JK/SK 3 to a Seat								
Emergency Exit Seats								



2 to a Seat Layout

Row	Driver's Area		AISLEWAY MUST BE KEPT CLEAR	Door Area		Row	
1						1	
2						2	
3						3	
4						4	
5						5	
6						6	
7						7	
8						8	
9						9	
10						10	
11						11	
12	this row only 2 to a seat					this row only 2 to a seat	12
Emergency Exit							
Seating Guidelines: JK-6 3 to a seat, 7-8 2 to a seat							
Emergency Exit Seats							



Acknowledgements:

Durham Student Transportation Services – Bus Behaviour and Discipline Handbook

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region - Safety Patroller Best Practices

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services – Seating Plan

Additional Resources:

Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services: Supporting the Driver for good behavior on the school bus

Northwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services Consortium: Student Discipline on School Buses

Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario: Tokens of Kindness

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region: Positive Interactions with Students

[Ministry of Transportation: School Bus Safety](#)

[Ministry of Education: A Resource for School Bus Drivers and Principals](#)



Supporting the Driver for good behaviour on the school bus

- 100 percent **GPS** on all our buses has created good behaviour on the buses. Students know that the drivers tracked to be on time at the stops. Kids are not running to the buses, starting their day off on a positive note and improving the driver and student relationship.
- 100 percent **Cameras** on all our buses support the driver when the monitoring student behaviour. The cameras have been used to support the driver in any discipline issues on the bus. There is now tangible evidence to support the driver and their actions should an issue arise, thus supporting the driver's description of events.
- STWDSTS staff train approximately 1200 **CAA patrollers** every year. The patrollers are in grade 5,6,7,8 are trained in proper CAA patrol duties, basic First Aide and get to practice various types of bus evacuations as part of their practical training. Students trained in both a "video and practical" manner and then are required to pass the CAA patrollers test. This training helps build the drivers confidence in the patrollers on their bus. The patrollers are reminded that they are not in charge of the bus, the drivers are in charge of the bus and the CAA patrollers are there to assist them as needed.
- STWDSTS has a **WIFI on school bus pilot** on some of our longer school routes for two of our school boards. The WIFI pilot on the long school routes allows kids to complete their homework on the bus and keeps them more focused on productive behaviour on the bus. The WIFI school buses have been well received and utilized resulting in extremely low or non-existent behavioural issues.



OASBO Working Group – Student Discipline on School

Buses

Respectfully submitted by:

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CONSORTIUM:

Common Practice:

- Assigned seating.
- JK/SK students to sit at the front of the bus, and progress back by grade.
- Encourage parents/schools to review the Buzzy Bee video found on our website, supplied by Intertrain.
- Provide reward system for students for good behaviour, i.e., 'Super Rider' Program. This program consists of stickers and certificates.
- Empower drivers in that they can refuse entry to a student who appears altered/under the influence – done in the context of safety
- Empower drivers in that they can refuse a child if they are having an obvious difficult day and their behaviour is out of control - done in the context of safety

Occasional Practice:

- Ask OPP to address the schools directly.
- Because we have integrated loads with multiple schools, school boards and JK -12, we will work with all principals to develop strategies that apply to students from all the schools (consistent consequences)

Rare Occasion:

- Engage OPP to 'ride-along'. Have also asked OPP to pull the bus over enroute and speak to the students directly
- Restorative Practice (This is when a student admits wrong and the school facilitates a meeting involving the bus driver/bus operator/Consortium/parents/ principal and student and it is explained to the student the impact on every one of their actions.)

Information/Resources:

- Parents & Educators.
- Super Rider Program.
- OPP/Dryden Police Services.
- Camera Systems on buses.
- Video's provided by Intertrain.
- Visual aids for younger students, i.e., picture with expected behaviour.
- Researching/surveying other Consortia in the Province.

- Regional Safety Day – provide School Board led training (Mental Health Workshop) to the drivers/Operators to promote good student behaviour.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:

Common Practice:

- Provide student with a bus buddy.
- Provide activities to do on the bus while seated, includes colouring sheets, electronics, devices, and/or book bags.
- Progressive discipline, leading to possible suspension.

Occasional Practice:

- Direct student to provide an apology to the bus driver/operator if warranted.

Rare Occasion:

- Provide an EA on the bus to strictly monitor behaviour.

BUS OPERATOR/DRIVER:

Common Practice:

- Provide activities/book bag for students to do while seated.
- Develop a seating plan.
- Pull over until the students settle down.
- Promote a positive atmosphere, i.e., driver once played 'Hound Dog' on the bus on Friday afternoons when the students were well behaved all week. The students enjoyed this and worked toward achieving the reward.
- In one case, the school brings the JK/SKs out 5 minutes early. The driver lets them bounce around the bus for a few minutes. Once the rest are ready to board, he sits them all at the front with an activity sheet and they all ride settled and without incident. Wouldn't work for all but this driver has it down perfectly.
- Write behaviour reports and send to school/consortium attention.
- Build relationships with the students beyond the customary good morning. This is done through things like the Enroute Emergency Evacuation Drill held twice a year.

Occasional Practice:

- Super Rider program – as described above.
- Calming cards, provided by the Consortium at the board led training (Mental Health Workshop) during Regional Safety Day.

Rare Occasion:

- Return the offending student to the school due to bad behaviour.
- Refuse the student entry either at their stop or at the school. Examples of this would be high school students being in an 'altered state' or elementary students having a temper tantrum.



Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO), is the transportation consortium for the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) and the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB).

STEO provides transportation for approximately 33,000 students on nearly 800 vehicles, traveling over 120,000 kilometres each day, to over 150 sites and schools across Eastern Ontario.

Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario is extremely excited to launch a new program with an eye to building positive bus culture. The **Tokens of Kindness** program will launch in autumn 2016 and is a platform designed to recognize acts of kindness on the bus.

Janet Murray, STEO's Manager of HR, Safety and Training acknowledges that the school bus can be a challenging environment for students. "To some extent, the school bus can be seen as a microcosm of the larger society—a diverse group of people of different ages, backgrounds and motivators, who nevertheless are bound by a shared journey."

Through STEO's **Tokens of Kindness** program, bus drivers will be provided with 'bus tokens' inscribed with the words "an act of kindness can change the world." Drivers will have an opportunity to distribute the tokens in recognition of acts of kindness, as a tangible tool to reinforce positive action on the bus.

"We hope that the program will resonate with drivers and passengers alike" explains Murray. "We often hear from bus drivers that they would welcome a means to recognize and thus reinforce positive behaviour. And for students, this program communicates to them that their acts of kindness really do make a difference."