

# Edna ISD

## School Bus Student and Parent Handbook

### Parents and Guardians:

Please discuss these bus passenger rules and procedures with your child. Your child should appreciate the important part he/she plays in accomplishing SAFE and EFFICIENT district transportation.

Your child should understand that riding a school bus is a privilege conditioned on appropriate, safe, and, respectful behavior. Unruly conduct on the bus is a very real risk to the safe operation of a school bus.

Your cooperation in communicating this very important message is appreciated.

**Bus Service Eligibility:** Bus service is provided school age students (grades PreK-12) residing two or more miles from school. Exceptions are made only when safety concerns are identified by the transportation office.

Bus services will be assigned pursuant to the student's home address. Bus changes will not be accepted except for change of residency.

**In route to Bus Stops:** Parents/guardians are encouraged to review their child's walking route to the bus stop, advising about safety concerns. Parents are encouraged to maintain a consistent schedule for their child to ensure safety and improve communication between the home and the school.

**Be Prompt:** Bus passengers should arrive at the bus stop no sooner or later than five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Buses will depart all schools, approximately seven minutes after dismissal times. For safety, once bus doors are closed, drivers will not stop for late arriving students.

**At the Bus Stop:** While waiting at the bus stop and departing from the bus, parents or guardians should be present to supervise their children. Students are expected to stand a safe distance from the street and avoid activities that could injure themselves or others. Students are expected to respect others' property. When the bus approaches, students must observe the instructions of the driver. This is particularly important in the winter when slick road conditions exist.

**Driver Authority:** The driver has full authority over the passengers on the bus. Seating assignments will be necessary to assure passenger safety. If inappropriate behavior is demonstrated by a student, the parent will be contacted to assist the student to modify the behavior of concern.

**Boarding/Departing Bus:** It may be necessary to cross the road to board the bus. Students are expected to observe the driver's instructions and always cross in front of the bus with the aid of the flashing stop sign lights and crossing arm.

**Passenger Conduct:** Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.
- Not eat or drink while riding in district vehicles.
- Not use mobile telephones or any other device to capture images or audio while riding in district vehicles.

Serious or persistent violations offensive to, or endangering the safety of others will result in progressive disciplinary actions. The age and experience of the student will help determine how many progressive steps are appropriate. Certain activities may result in immediate suspension from bus riding privileges for a minimum of five (5) school days and possible criminal charges. These include but are not limited to:

- Fighting/assault in any form on the bus on any person.
- Possession of dangerous weapons or articles - guns, knives, sparking devices, (real or toy), etc.
- Possession or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.
- Pointing a laser beam at bus driver.
- Destruction of district or private property.
- Flagrant display of disrespect and/or defiance toward bus driver.

Assault on a bus driver will result in indefinite bus privilege suspension and possible criminal charges.

**Bad Weather Days:** Detailed emergency route information is distributed at the school. Local radio and TV stations will provide up-to-date information each morning when the roads are unsafe for buses to travel.

**Items Not Allowed on the Bus:** For reasons of safety and health and in order to comply with state law and district policies, the following items are not allowed on a school bus:

- Any item which cannot be transported easily or which creates a safety concern - glass objects (bottles, jars, etc.), inflated balloons, skateboards, baseball bats, etc.
- Open containers of food, drink, gum
- Live animals - bugs, worms, plants, dirt, other growing projects, etc.
- Oversized objects and instruments - those that cannot fit safely in the seat with the student
- Weapons - guns, knives, razor blades, etc. (real or toy)
- Sports equipment which could endanger others - javelins, pole vaults or shot puts, etc.
- Distractive items or electronic devices - trading cards, Game Boys, or CD players, etc.

Please arrange for alternative transportation if any of the above need to go to or from school.

### **Student Discipline:**

The district has adopted a progressive discipline policy which emphasizes logical consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Camera boxes are mounted on the buses. Student behavior may be monitored or observed from the video system. Parents will not be allowed to view a video due to the privacy rights of all other students that may appear on the video.

Parents are encouraged to contact the transportation director or campus principal any time they have concerns. If appropriate, a conference with the student and the driver may be arranged.

The District reserves the right to suspend transportation privileges for any student who demonstrates behavior unreasonably distracting to the driver which may contribute to unsafe operation.

Complete disciplinary procedures are distributed annually and are available at each school or the Transportation office.

### **Disciplinary Procedures:**

When, in the opinion of the driver, a serious rule violation occurs, when the driver's efforts to deal with less severe violations are unsuccessful, or a pattern seems to have developed, a school bus incident report will be initiated. The intent is to maintain good order and a safe environment for students riding buses to and from school or school sponsored activities, as well as to notify parents of the misconduct of their children. The following are standard actions that will generally be applied uniformly in response to documented incidents.

**Grades PreK – 5:**

- 1st / 2nd Offense: Student counseled and warned by driver and/or administrator and possible school offense;
- 3rd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for three days;
- 4th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for five days;
- 5th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for ten days or more, depending upon nature of the offense or suspension of bus privileges for the remainder of the semester.

The campus Principal or Assistant Principal will determine the extent of the suspension.

**Grades 6 - 12:**

- 1st Offense: Student counseled and warned by driver and/or administrator;
- 2nd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for three days;
- 3rd Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for five days;
- 4th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for ten or more days, depending upon the nature of the offense.
- 5th Offense: Suspension of bus privileges for the remainder of the semester.

The campus Principal or Assistant Principal will determine the extent of the suspension.

There may be some exceptions to these disciplinary actions in extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the campus Principal or Assistant Principal. If a student is suspended for misconduct on any bus, the suspension will apply to all buses.