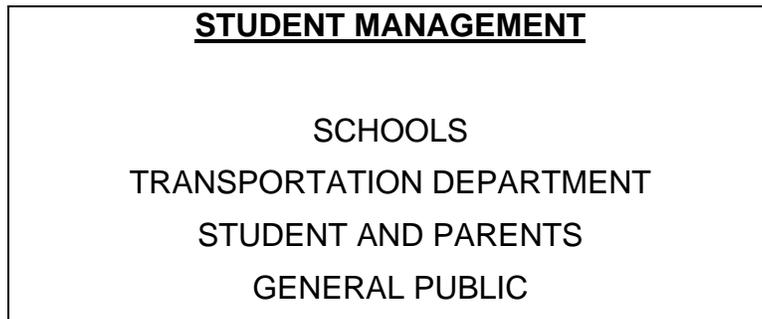


## UNIT SEVEN - STUDENT MANAGEMENT

The objective of student management is to insure a safe bus ride by allowing the driver's attention to be on operating the vehicle. In order for the school bus driver to safely operate the bus, it is essential that the student passengers behave in a controlled manner. The school bus must be looked upon as an extension of the classroom. Student management for the driver will encompass a wide variety of child psychology, adolescent behavior patterns and student management techniques. Unlike the teacher, whose classroom environment is more defined and with only one specific age group, the school bus driver will be in close contact with a variety of elementary, junior high and senior high age groups. Student management will encompass the following interdependent segments of the community.



*Each of these segments should communicate both needs and problems in order to find solutions.*

### **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS**

Schools should include programs of instruction to improve the student's safety at school bus stops and on the bus.

All school staff should be familiar with school district policies on student discipline, rules and regulations for student behavior, misconduct procedures, and special trip sponsor procedures.

### **THE ROLE OF TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL**

**Supervisor of Transportation** - The supervisor should provide avenues for cooperative problem solving which includes all levels of school district personnel, parents, and students. Rules for students and school bus drivers should be established and administered uniformly. An awareness of new techniques, equipment, child psychology and behavioral patterns of children is important. A program of pre- and in-service training should be developed, implemented and constantly reviewed.

**School Bus Driver** - The school day for the transported student begins and ends with the bus. The driver needs to exhibit self-control and professionalism and have a plan to establish appropriate behavior. Consistency is absolutely necessary for success. The school bus driver is responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of all passengers. In supervising the students, inappropriate student conduct will require the combined efforts of the driver, the transportation department and school administrators. You should have the attitude that driving a safe bus is most important. A student should not prevent you from driving a safe bus. The other passengers must be assured of a safe and pleasant bus ride.

Discipline on school buses is probably the biggest problem confronting school bus drivers today. The attitude of the driver should be consistent with the three F's:

- Firm - Be prepared to follow through. Avoid giving a directive that you cannot enforce.
- Friendly - Be approachable to the students, while keeping in mind that you, the driver, are in charge.
- Fair - Be consistent in disciplining students.

Understanding the principles of child psychology will help avoid trouble before it begins. Overlooking the violations of conduct of one student will cause you to lose the respect of the other students.

Be careful to strike a happy medium by not being too lenient or too harsh. Both extremes are equally poor for the morale of the school bus riders. Loud talking on the bus is a problem that requires much patience, but absolute silence is not a healthy atmosphere. Issuing a directive does not complete the teaching process. A directive must be patiently and constantly repeated.

*It seems the minority (undisciplined) riders set the pace for the majority.*

Be aware of the fact that each driver is working for an educational system whose job is training the minds of students. Too frequently students are expected to be finished products with adult attitudes and this simply is not the case. Strive to build morale and cooperation with the students on the bus. In the course of time, the student morale will be a great help in controlling the worst offenders. When students discover that improper conduct is not acceptable to the group, offenders will hesitate to do those things, which cause them to lose prestige among their fellow students.

When speaking to an offender, speak in a friendly manner but with a firm voice. There should be no anger involved. Do not let personal problems reflect themselves in your mood or judgment while dealing with the students. If discipline is necessary, move the student to a seat near the front. Never put a student off the bus to walk home. Emphasize the disciplinary action that will be taken and that if it is not corrected to an

acceptable level, the student may have his privilege of riding the bus taken away.

*Think before you act.*

Tips on maintaining discipline:

1. Be friendly. Have a sense of humor.
2. Be sincere in your work.
3. Set firm, clear rules. Never give a directive you do not intend to enforce. Do not pick on every little thing. Commend good behavior.
4. Set a good example. Look for good qualities.
5. Be firm, fair, and consistent.
6. Say "do this," rather than "don't do that." Be positive.
7. Keep your "cool."
8. Have a positive attitude.
9. Know district policies for reporting problems.
10. Be assertive: the driver is in charge.
11. Do not strike or touch a student.

*Don't become a constant mirror watcher. Safe driving requires your attention on the road.*

### **THE ROLE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Students of all age groups are obligated by the expressed privilege granted by the Board of Education to ride the public school bus, to obey and conform to the safety and behavioral rules of the school district.

The parents of the students are obligated to instruct their children to cooperate with the school bus driver in accordance with the safety and behavioral rules of the school district.

*Parents often do not accept the fact that their child has misbehaved at school or on the bus.*

### **THE ROLE OF GENERAL PUBLIC**

The public must obey the Colorado State Statutes. Also, they are to promote the safety of school-age children as pedestrians and transported users of the roads of Colorado.

The schools and the transportation department should provide a program of public information with the objective of communicating to the parents and general public stating district policies and procedures for student transportation.

## **STUDENT SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR RULES**

The key to a safe, well-regulated bus is for the students to provide the school bus driver with an atmosphere that will allow him/her to direct special attention to safe driving; and the school bus driver providing the students a standard of uniformity when applying the rules of the district. District rules may vary, but should be consistent with state regulations. The set of rules should be limited to 5 to 8 rules.

Students should follow directions the first time they are given. The rules should be posted in the front of the bus.

A copy of the rules could be sent to each student, parent/guardian with a form to be returned with both signatures indicating the rules were read and understood.

### **Sample Bus Rules:**

1. Students are required to follow the bus driver's instructions.
2. Students must be prompt at the bus stop. When crossing the roadway to meet or leave the bus, students should cross 10 feet in front of the bus.
3. Students are to be seated, facing forward while riding the bus. Both feet shall be on or near the floor. Students shall not open or close windows without permission. Heads and arms must be kept inside the bus at all times.
4. Any behavior which jeopardizes the safety of the passengers or driver, is prohibited, i.e., use of drugs, alcohol, exiting rear door, inflicting bodily harm, as well as vandalism, and littering.
5. Students may talk quietly while on the bus. Obscene or foul language, or gestures will not be tolerated. Students must be quiet at railroad crossings.

## **REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR**

Each district should have a policy and procedure for reporting unacceptable behavior. Here is a suggested procedure.

Student behavior that is inconsistent with desired safe behavior is reported as either major or minor incidents. Student misconduct forms are filled out by the driver and returned to the Transportation Supervisor for initial screening but only after the driver has attempted to solve the problem within his/her own capabilities. The Transportation Supervisor determines the decision whether the reported misbehavior will be identified as minor or major.

*Student due process:*

- *Have a set process or procedure.*
- *Make sure it is written.*

- *Make sure the driver, student riders, and parents are familiar with the policy.*

## **BULLYING**

Refer to your district's Safe School Plan for information on bullying.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Any course of action or consequences in student management must be uniform but flexible enough to fit the conditions and circumstances of the violation and the individual(s) involved. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Student warned by driver (driver to student conference)
- Assigned seat
- Parents notified (per district policy)
- Assignment of student to "remedial tasks" at school, on the bus, or at the bus terminal
- Principal, parent, student, driver conference
- Withdrawal of transportation services

Good behavior should be rewarded. Do something the students like, and which is appropriate for the age level. Rewards may include, but not be limited to:

- Praise
- Note to parents
- First in line, first off the bus
- Special seat (window, next to a friend)
- Awards, e.g., smiley faces, stickers

## **STUDENT-TO-STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Adapted from *Steering Clear of Sexual Harassment*, Peggy A. Burns, Esq. (Available from Education Compliance Press at 303-604-6141)

The school bus is a unique environment in which verbal abuse and harassment can easily take place. A student being harassed has no place to escape the unwelcome behavior. It is important for the bus driver and para-professional to be aware of such behavior and take appropriate action. Any form of harassment described below is impermissible, and by law, the school district must take action to stop it.

No student should be subjected to behaviors that are intimidating, offensive, or threatening. Such behaviors may be identified as harassment based on:

- Sex

- Ethnic background
- Religion
- National origin
- Race
- Disability

**Sexual Harassment Definition** - “Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other sex-based verbal or physical conduct where (1) submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of the individual’s education; or (2) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual’s education by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.” (Letter of finding to Dr. Battles, West Hartford Board of Education, June 8, 1993)

### **Review District Policy Regarding Sexual Harassment**

The school district has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for students. This includes the bus ride. Sexual harassment is a type of illegal discrimination and must be dealt with in such a way as to stop the behavior. Keep in mind that both boys and girls can be the victims of sexual harassment. When students are exposed to inappropriate sexual behavior, you should assume it is unwelcome, even if the student doesn’t act like it is. Keep in mind also, that even if the student being harassed isn’t affected or pretends not to be affected, other students on the bus may be suffering the effects of the inappropriate behavior. Students can become uncomfortable and actually dread getting on the bus.

Three steps the driver and paraprofessional should take:

#### **1. Identify Sexual Harassment**

Some examples of verbal and physical sexual harassment are:

- Conveying rumors or making suggestive comments about a student’s sexual activity
- Calling students names of a sexual nature
- Obscene gestures, including male students grabbing their own genitals and/or rubbing themselves in a sexually suggestive manner
- Sexual molestation
- Use of sexually explicit language, like slang terms for parts of the anatomy
- “Mooing” a student with express intent to refer to bust size
- Creating graffiti that uses explicit sexual language to describe and degrade members of the opposite sex

- Unwelcome touching, pinching, or restraining of students by students of the opposite sex regardless of the ages of the students
- Exposing private parts to students of the opposite sex
- Flipping up skirts or snapping bras
- Threatening unwanted sexual activity
- Students' subjecting other students to continual teasing or to lewd remarks about their anatomy
- Offering a student money to perform sex acts, and other propositions of a sexual nature
- Off-color jokes
- Sexually harassing drawings and other "art" work
- Simulating sex acts

(Steering Clear of Sexual Harassment, Peggy Burns, pg. II 15, 16)

## **2. Take Action**

When sexual harassment has been identified, it is necessary to accurately document what has happened and to immediately report the incident(s) to the appropriate district administrator. An investigation by the district administrator should follow a report of sexual harassment. Following is a list of what should be reported:

- Age of victim(s)
- Details of conduct they observed or were told
- How long the conduct had been going on according to the information they have
- How long a particular incident lasted
- Whether the victim is subjected to the same activity repeatedly or if the offender varies his/her approach
- Whether or not others joined in the harassing conduct
- Whether conduct is directed at one student, or more than one
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of everyone who has spoken with you about the conduct
- Names of anyone whose names have come up in discussions about the conduct
- Any information you have which will facilitate a thorough investigation and fair assessment of what happened, and any actions necessary to be undertaken

(Steering Clear of Sexual Harassment, Peggy Burns, pp. 111-12-111-15)

### **3. Follow Up**

Continue monitoring the situation. Report to the appropriate administrators if efforts to end the harassment aren't working. Remember, the bottom line is, the harassment must be stopped.