

Hitchcock Independent School District

School Bus Riders' Safety Handbook 2008-2009



DURHAM
SCHOOL SERVICES

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Hitchcock

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

8117 Highway 6, Hitchcock, TX 77563

(409) 986-5514 Office, 409-986-5141 Fax

Michael F. Bergman, Ed.D.

Superintendent

mbergman@hitchcockisd.org

Dear Parent:

The Hitchcock Independent School District provides bus transportation to and from school as a courtesy service for eligible students residing in the district through contracted services with Durham School Services. The State of Texas prescribes the conditions governing school bus operations.

The district is pleased to provide transportation for its eligible students and solicits your assistance in helping create a safe, healthy operation. You may do so by reading the enclosed material and acknowledging receipt by completing and returning the enclosed *School Bus Rider's Contract* to the bus driver. In addition, we ask your cooperation with school personnel in developing proper behavior patterns for those pupils who ride the bus.

Please call Durham School Services at 409-986-9794 or 409-938-7961 for additional information concerning bus routes, schedules, drivers, or other concerns. The campus principal will also be available to answer questions.

Larry Allen

Hitchcock High School

409-986-5581

Pat Fox

Crosby Middle School

409-986-5528

Barbara Trahan

Stewart Elementary School

409-986-5561

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael F. Bergman, Ed.D.
Superintendent

GENERAL RULES

1. Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time will a student act toward or address comments to the bus driver in a disrespectful manner, or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
2. Board and leave the bus at designated stops only. The majority of designated stops are at the nearest corner. (Provided there is a way for the bus to get out without backing).
3. RAILROAD CROSSINGS. Students are to be quiet upon approaching the tracks and remain quiet until bus has cleared tracks.
4. Only students eligible to ride may be transported. Students must ride their assigned bus. Student will be assigned a seat. Failure of the student to sit in his/her assigned seat will result in termination of your privilege to ride the bus.
5. You are not allowed to ride home on another bus unless a family emergency exists and a note is provided, by the parent/guardian, in advance and given to the campus administrator.
6. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide transportation to school if a child misses the bus.
7. If you do not ride the bus for (3) three days, you must call the transportation office or the bus may not come by again until contacted.
8. Dirt roads are not always safe for a bus to travel when the road is wet; it is the parents' responsibility to meet the bus at the nearest pavement. If you are not sure if the bus will run, call transportation at 409-986-9794.

PROCEDURES FOR WAITING FOR THE BUS

1. Be at your bus stop (10) ten minutes before scheduled pickup time. The driver will not wait or honk.
2. Stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. When the bus approaches form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
4. Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop, and until red loading lights come on.
5. Parents should instruct their children on what procedures to follow if the bus is missed.
6. Students should never chase the bus if it has already left their stop.

LOADING THE BUS

1. Do not push or shove.
2. Use the handrail and steps.
3. Go to your assigned seat, or the first seat you come to. The bus will not move until all students are seated.
4. Students will sit in seats assigned by the bus driver.
5. ALL BAGGAGE/BAND INSTRUMENTS—Any items brought on the bus must be able to sit in student's lap. Student must be able to hold baggage at all times. NO band instruments larger than a trombone will be allowed on the route bus. (French horns and larger can become flying projectiles.)
6. Students will be responsible for the items they bring on the bus.
7. The driver has the authority to confiscate prohibited items. The first time the item is confiscated the parent may retrieve it from transportation. A second violation will result in the payment of \$15.00 in order to retrieve confiscated items. The item will not be returned to the student. Additional violations will result in termination of transportation privileges through the end of the school year.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS

1. Remain seated at all times while the bus is moving. Each student will be expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until released by the Driver.
2. Do not change seats. The driver will assign seats.
3. A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another a place to sit.
4. Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition.
5. Scuffling, fighting, and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language and gestures are forbidden.
6. Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus. Keep all pens and pencils put away at all times.
7. Do not mark, cut, or scratch any part of the bus. Restitution for vandalism costs will be paid by the person(s) responsible and will result in termination of transportation privileges through the end of the school year.

8. Students only during supervised drills or actual emergencies should use the emergency door and exit controls.
9. Students will never attempt to sit in the drivers' seat or operate the passenger door or other driver controls except in cases of extreme emergency.
10. Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip, and shall keep their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the bus aisle. Keep all body parts inside the bus and to yourself

GETTING OFF THE BUS

1. Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped and the driver releases you.
2. Use the handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus.
3. Wait for your turn to leave the bus; pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
4. You shall use your assigned stop at all time, (A.M. and P.M. routes)
5. Stay clear of the bus when unloading. Do not chase, touch, or hang on the bus at any time.
6. Never cross behind the bus.
7. If an article is dropped or rolls near or under the bus, do not try to get it. Make certain the driver sees you, go to the door of the bus and ask the driver for help.

DROPPING OFF PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

Parents or a designee must be at the bus stop to receive Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students. If there is no one to receive the AM PK student, the child will be returned to the campus and the PM PK and K students will be returned to the Transportation Department. The parents will be responsible for picking up the student from these locations. Students returned more than three (3) times a semester will have their riding privileges suspended until a conference between the parent and Director of Transportation is held and an agreement is made.

CROSSING THE STREET OR HIGHWAY

1. All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and move to a point 10 to 15 feet in front of the right bumper and wait for the driver to signal you that it is safe to cross.

2. Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
3. NEVER cross BEHIND the bus.
4. CAUTION! Be alert for the vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or unloading students.
5. Cross all streets at intersections. Obey all traffic signs on your way home.

ACCIDENTS OR EMERGENCIES

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.
 - A. The students nearest the door will open the door and leave the bus in a single file line as quietly as possible. Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
 - B. Once outside the bus, follow the driver's instructions completely.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR TRIPS

1. Bus rider rules apply to all school-sponsored events.
2. Discipline will be the responsibility of the building principal and the trip sponsor.
3. The bus shall return clean when returning from the trip.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

1. Food or beverages of any kind. (eating and drinking is not permitted on the bus)
2. Tobacco and alcohol
3. Glass containers
4. LIVE animals or insects.
5. Chewing gum.
6. Weapons, explosive devices, matches or cigarette lighters, harmful drugs or chemicals.
7. Any object (musical instrument, shop project) too large to placed in student's lap or on the floor between knees.
8. Radios, tape players, pagers, beepers, video games, yo-yos, and laser lights or pointers.

9. Cell phones, CD players, ipods, mp3's pagers, beeper, any other electronic device cannot be used while on the bus. Any such items used while on the bus will be confiscated by the bus driver and returned only to parent by request for a \$15.00 administration fee.

DESCRIPTION OF INFRACTIONS

CATEGORY I

Minor Infractions

Include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Using profanity or making offensive remarks or gestures. (automatic discipline referral)
2. Talking loudly or yelling.
3. Throwing objects (items that distract-non harmful)
4. Leaving paper or other debris on the bus
5. Bothering (poking, pushing, etc.) other bus riders.
6. Not following the bus driver's directions.

CATEGORY II

Major Infractions

Include, but not limited to the following:

1. Accumulating (3) three minor infractions.
2. Being defiant or disrespectful to the bus driver.
3. Fighting or Scuffling
4. Throwing harmful objects inside or outside of the bus.
5. Vandalism or destruction of the school bus.
6. Smoking
7. Use of drugs or alcohol.
8. Any unauthorized use of emergency exits.

DISCIPLINE

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. The bus driver will administer discipline, with assistance from the Transportation Director. All school board policies that apply to student conduct and other student related activities apply to the school bus.

The following procedures shall be followed when discipline concerns arise on the bus or on an extracurricular activity:

1. The driver will attempt to correct the behavior of the student(s).
2. If the student(s) do not comply with the driver's request, the incident will be reported to the Principal. The driver will record the incident on the School Bus Conduct Report.
3. The Principal will investigate the incident and notify the driver of the action taken.
4. The student will be given two copies of the School Bus Safety Report to take home for a parent or guardian signature. The signed slip must be returned to the driver. Until the signed form is returned, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus. It is the student's responsibility to inform a parent or guardian about the Bus Conduct Report.
5. A conference involving the Principal, Assistant Principal, Bus Driver, and Parent(s) or Guardian(s) may be necessary.
6. The Principal has the authority to suspend a student's bus riding privileges. If suspension occurs, the parent or guardian and principal will be notified prior to the suspension so the parent or guardian can make alternative transportation arrangements for the student.
7. In cases of serious misconduct that may endanger the safety of the driver and other passengers on the bus, the student(s) will be removed immediately by any school official or law enforcement agent. As quickly as possible, the principal and parent or guardian will be notified of the situation. The student's bus privileges may be revoked pending investigation of the incident.
8. Conduct and safety violations will be handled by school officials at his/her discretion. This may range from probationary status to days of suspension from the bus, depending on the number of severity of the violation.

If you would like to discuss any of these procedures please call the campus principal:

<i>Larry Allen</i> 5581	<i>Hitchcock High School</i>	<i>409-986-</i>
<i>Pat Fox</i> 5528	<i>Crosby Middle School</i>	<i>409-986-</i>
<i>Barbara Trahan</i> 5561	<i>Stewart Elementary School</i>	<i>409-986-</i>

or Durham Transportation at 409-986-9794

The partnership that is created between transportation, the school and the parents will provide a safer and more successful ride for all students.

Hitchcock ISD's goal is to transport every eligible student to and from school SAFE, ON TIME, AND READY TO LEARN EVERY DAY.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

The appeal process may be found in the Hitchcock ISD Board Policy book.

VIDEO CAMERAS

Video cameras with audio recording capabilities may be used on each bus during routes or on trips.

Only district employees involved with the specific incident may view the videos. Parents, guardians, or other non-district personnel may not view the videos unless otherwise interpreted by law as being permitted.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Upon receipt of a bus conduct report from the driver, the Principal will review/investigate the offense and administered the disciplinary action deemed necessary for the infraction. Suspension of the bus riding privileges may occur depending on the severity of the infraction or the continued violation of school bus rules. A school bus incident report will then be sent home with the student. It is the student's responsibility to make sure parents receive and sign all notices or referrals. In case of a bus suspension, notification is also sent to the students attending campus. Violations of the rules will be dealt with on a case-by case basis.

Appendix A

School Bus Rider's Contract

**Hitchcock I.S.D.
School Bus Rider's Contract**

I have been given and have read the Bus Rider's Safety Handbook and agree to abide by these rules.

Student's Name (Please Print)

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

Bus Pick-Up--Street Address
(Please print)

Bus Drop Off--Street Address
(Please print)

City, Zip

City, Zip

Work Telephone

Home Telephone

School

Child's Date of Birth

Grade

Child's Age

AM Route #

PM Route #

This is your child's official registration card for transportation to and from school. This must be returned within five (5) school days after it is received, or transportation will be discontinued.

If you have any questions regarding Hitchcock ISD bus routes, schedules, or drivers, please call us at 409-409-986-9794. For all other issues, call the local campus principal.

Larry Allen	Hitchcock High School	409-986-5581
Pat Fox	Crosby Middle School	409-986-5528
Barbara Trahan	Stewart Elementary School	409-986-5561

Actual location of Student's bus stop will be determined by the Transportation Department.