



Priority Charter Schools



2022/2023

Bus Rider Safety Handbook



BUS RIDER'S SAFETY HANDBOOK

Parents and Bus Riders

The goal of the Bus Rider's Handbook is to help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for students and staff who ride Priority Charter School (PCS) buses. Parents should take time to read and discuss the material in this handbook with their children. Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by PCS and should be treated as such.

General Safety Rules

1. Student riders are under the constant authority of the bus driver and will respectfully follow the driver's rules while on the bus and while within 100ft of their bus stop.
2. Riders will load and unload the bus only at their designated stops.
3. Only PCS students and staff are allowed to ride PCS buses.
4. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation if a child misses the bus.
5. Coed seating (sharing of the same bench) is prohibited except in the case of siblings. Parents may request a brother or sister provide supervision of their younger sibling by sitting together. All other coed seating is strictly prohibited.
6. Drivers will not hold the bus at morning or afternoon stops to accommodate late students/parents.
7. Students whose parents were not at the pickup point on time will be taken back to the school at the end of the route. Parents will not attempt to meet the bus at another stop to collect their child/children.

Procedures for Students Waiting for the Bus

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pick-up time. The driver cannot wait or **honk for riders**.
2. Stand on the sidewalk or stand back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. When you see the bus, form a line and prepare to load immediately.
4. Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
5. Students who miss the bus should go home immediately. Parents should instruct their children on what procedures to follow if their student misses the bus.
6. Students will abide by the school rules and regulations concerning bus students, including conduct and dress code while waiting for the bus.

Loading the Bus

1. Do not push or shove.
2. Do not run to the bus.
3. Use handrail and steps to prevent falls.
4. Go to your assigned seat. (Assigned seating is a requirement from the Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency. Students must sit in their assigned seat at all times.)

Conduct on the bus

1. Electronic devices will only be allowed at the driver's discretion.
2. Students will remain in their assigned seat until instructed otherwise by the driver.
3. A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another a place to sit.
4. Each student will be expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until the door opens.
5. Normal conversation is permitted; loud noises are not permitted as they may distract the driver, causing unsafe conditions.
6. The use of obscene, vulgar, profane language or gestures is strictly prohibited and may constitute immediate semester suspension.

7. Do not spit or throw any object inside or outside the bus.
8. Riders will not make signs of any nature to display from the bus window without the explicit approval of the bus driver.
9. Do not mark, cut or scratch any part of the bus. **Vandalism repair costs will be paid by the person or persons who are responsible.**
10. The emergency door and exit controls are only to be used during supervised drills or actual emergencies.
11. Students shall face forward for the duration of the trip, keeping their feet on the floor in front of them and out of the aisle.
12. Students will not extend any part of their body or extend any article out of the window or into the aisle.

Exiting the Bus

1. Stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
2. Check around the seat for personal items.
3. Use the handrail and take one step at a time when exiting the bus.
4. Wait your turn to leave the bus. Pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
5. No student is allowed to get off at a stop other than their own, unless the driver has been notified by the transportation department.
6. **Never attempt to retrieve a dropped item from under the bus.**
7. All Pre-K through 4th grade students must have a parent, approved adult, or sibling 5th grade or older present at the bus stop in order for the younger student to be released from the bus. If no adult or sibling is present, the student(s) will be returned to the campus for pick up. (The campus director may make an exception to this rule once a completed waiver has been submitted to the campus office and approved by the transportation department.)

Crossing the Street or Highway

1. When crossing in front of the bus, move to a point 10-12 feet in front of the right bumper, and wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
2. Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
3. Never cross the road behind the bus.
4. CAUTION! Be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading and unloading students.
5. Cross all streets at intersections. Obey all traffic signals and signs on your way home.

Prohibited Items

1. Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or drug paraphernalia are prohibited on the bus or within 100ft of a bus stop.
2. Pornographic materials to include images and videos displayed on electronic devices are strictly prohibited.
3. Live animals and insects are not permitted without special approval regardless of cage or container.
4. Weapons, explosives (such as fireworks), knives, water guns, laser pens or pointers, any unsheathed pointed article(s) or object(s) that could be considered dangerous to the safety of the students and the driver are prohibited from entering the bus.
5. Students will keep the aisle clear. Any articles too large to be held in the student's lap or imposed on others will not be allowed on the bus.
6. **Student will not eat or drink on the school bus.** With the exception of water, open bottles or cans are not permitted on the bus.
7. Gum, lollipops, suckers, and hard or sticky candy outside of the original packing must be disposed of prior to boarding the bus.

Drivers, staff members, and bus monitors have expressed permission to confiscate any item that could be considered dangerous, inappropriate, or prohibited by definition our use.

Drivers and school officials are not responsible for articles left on the bus.

Accidents or Emergencies

1. Follow the bus driver's instructions.
2. If students must leave the bus, stay in a group.
3. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
 - A. Emergency exits will be opened by the nearest capable student.
 - B. Leave the bus in a single file as quickly and as quietly as possible.
 - C. Evacuation will start with the student chosen by the driver.
 - D. Once outside the bus, follow the driver's instructions.

Extra-Curricular Trips

1. Bus rider rules apply to all school sponsored events.
2. Discipline on the bus will be the responsibility of the school principal and the trip sponsor.
3. The bus must be cleaned when returned from the trip.

Video

1. Most of the PCS buses are equipped with video cameras.
2. Video recordings will only be made available to the Director of Transportation, Campus Director, and Administration Personnel.
3. Video tapes or copies will not be released from the Transportation Office with exception to law enforcement.

DISCIPLINE

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. Students are expected to follow the same rules and policies laid out for the school. Discipline actions due to violations will be administered by the Campus Director. Level and consequences for improper conduct on the bus include the following:

Level I Conduct behaviors:

1. Very loud talking, screaming
2. Using inappropriate language
3. Speaking in a way that teases, hurts, or harasses others
4. Failure to keep the bus clean
5. Eating or drinking on the bus without the permission of the driver (water is permitted in a proper container during the extreme heat of the summer months)
6. Failure to follow the bus driver's instructions

Consequences of Level I Misbehavior

Parent notification and one or more of the following:

1. Warning (written or verbal)
2. Assigned to another seat
3. Consultation with campus administrator

The campus administrator may increase the consequence of any level of misconduct.

Level II Conduct behaviors:

1. Failure to be seated when the bus is moving
2. Failure to keep hands, head, or feet inside the bus
3. Throwing any object inside the bus or out of the bus

4. Vandalizing the bus or others personal property
5. Hitting, punching, kicking, or physically assaulting another student or driver
6. Continuing Level I behavior

Consequences of Level II Misbehavior

Driver will send a referral to the campus administrator

1. 1st referral – warning up to 3 days bus riding suspension
2. 2nd referral – 10 days bus riding suspension
3. 3rd referral – 15 days bus riding suspension
4. 4th referral – semester bus riding suspension
5. 5th referral – discipline at the discretion of the campus administrator

The campus administrator may choose to increase the consequence of any level of misconduct.

Level III Conduct Behaviors

Possession or use of the following:

1. Weapons
2. Matches or lighters
3. Controlled substance, including drugs, alcohol, tobacco and Vaping products
4. Continuing Level II behavior

Consequences of Level III Misbehavior

Driver will send a referral to the campus:

1. 5 days suspended riding privileges or longer (to be determined by the campus administrator)
2. Suspended riding privileges for the remainder of the current school semester or year

Disciplinary action may begin at any level depending on the severity of the violation and determined by the campus administrator. Students are responsible to notify their parents or guardian of disciplinary actions.

Revised: 28 JUL 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE BUS RIDER SAFETY HANDBOOK

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Thank you for taking time to review the information provided within the Bus Rider Safety Handbook. By completing this form, you acknowledge receipt of the handbook and agree to follow all the rules, guidelines, and expectations expressed within its content. It is the responsibility of the student to know and understand the policies of this manual. We urge parents to read the contents of the handbook with their children. Failure to know and understand the rules within the manual will not serve as a viable excuse for infractions.

Thank you,

Jason Osburn
Executive Director of Operations
Priority Charter Schools

I acknowledge I have received a paper copy of the Priority Charter Schools Bus Rider Handbook for the 2022–2023 school year. I understand students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the handbook. I recognize failure to comply with the handbook shall result in the loss of transportation privileges.

Campus _____

Grade _____

Date _____

Student (print) _____

Signature _____

Parent (print) _____

Signature _____

Failure to return this form by the prescribed date shall result in suspension of transportation services until a completed form has been received by the school office.