

Student Conduct on School Buses

West Virginia State Code §18A-5-1, §18-5-13; §18-2-5 authorize regulations for the safe and efficient transportation of pupils in West Virginia. WV Code §18A-5-1 authorizes school bus operators to exercise authority over the passengers in the place of the parent while the passenger is on the bus. Transportation guidelines are also covered under West Virginia Board of Education Transportation Regulations, Policy 4336.

While the law allows the school district to furnish transportation, it does not relieve parents of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

Once a child boards the bus, and only at that time, does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the appropriate bus stop at the close of the school day.

It is the intent of the Monroe County School system to operate a safe and efficient transportation program for students. Such an intent is predicated on desirable behavior of bus passengers and consequences for misbehavior. When the school has adopted a positive discipline program, bus offenses shall be considered as part of the record of the individual students at that school. Similarly, discipline for incidents on the bus may also include discipline from the school level as well.

Section 1 Student Behavior Expectations

Outside the bus pupils shall:

- 1.1 Walk on left side of road, facing traffic.
- 1.2 Be at designated bus stop at scheduled time.
- 1.3 Stand on the right hand side of the roadway, except where such would compromise their safety.
- 1.4 Never stand or play in roadway.
- 1.5 Line up orderly, safely away from traffic lane until bus has completely stopped.
- 1.6 Board the bus in a safe, orderly manner without pushing and shoving.
- 1.7 Follow the bus operator's instruction carefully by proceeding safely and alertly when getting off the bus and/or crossing the roadway.
- 1.8 Make the assigned transfer from one bus to another, unless prior written permission from the parent is in the hands of the driver.
- 1.9 Go home promptly after leaving the bus at the end of the school day.

Inside the bus pupils shall:

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- 1.10 Go immediately to their seats and courteously share seats with others boarding the bus.
 - 1.11 Sit in assigned seat (bus operator has the authority to assign seats.)
 - 1.12 Be held responsible for vandalism that may occur to the seats in which they ride. (Promptly report any damage found to the bus operator.)
 - 1.13 Change seats only with bus operator's permission, and only when bus is not in motion.
 - 1.14 Get on or off bus only when it is completely stopped.
 - 1.15 Cooperate with any monitor on duty.
 - 1.16 Cooperate with the bus operator to keep the bus clean. Eating and drinking on the bus are prohibited, except when medically necessary.
 - 1.17 Observe classroom conduct, except for ordinary conversation, to enable the bus operator to give attention to safe driving. (Avoid unnecessary conversation with bus operator.)
 - 1.18 Keep head and limbs inside bus windows at all times.
 - 1.19 Report any open exit, or released latch to bus operator immediately
 - 1.20 Provide enrollment information to bus operator as requested.

Section 2 Unacceptable (but not extreme) Behavior Level One

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- 2.1 Riding in step well or forward of front row of seats.
 - 2.2 Standing while bus is in motion, at any time a seat is available or moving on bus while bus is in motion.
 - 2.3 Interference with the orderly process of the bus operation (not being ready at bus stop, not maintaining classroom conduct, eating drinking, etc.)
 - 2.4 The use of profane or obscene language or language that might be deemed sexually explicit.
 - 2.5 Littering the school bus.
 - 2.6 Inappropriate displays of affection (nothing permitted beyond holding hands.)
 - 2.7 Opening emergency exits, except during emergencies or directed by bus operator.

Section 3 Unacceptable Extreme Behaviors Level Two

- 3.1 Aggressive or threatening behavior toward other passengers or bus operator, including throwing objects of any nature.
- 3.2 Possession of illicit or controlled materials (weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products, etc., or any item covered under §18A-5-1, the Safe Schools Act.)

- 3.3 Use of abusive/profane language directed at the bus operator.
- 3.4 Actions to deliberately distract the driver.
- 3.5 Sexual harassment of any form including indecent exposure.
- 3.6 Vandalism to school property.

Section 4 Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior

4.1 Level One Offenses

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- 4.1.1 First Offense Verbal reprimand; driver will record incident
 - 4.1.2 Second Offense Written notice (discipline form) to parents
(Copy given to principal, transportation director)
 - 4.1.3 Third Offense One day suspension from school bus (parents and proper personnel will be notified)
 - 4.1.4 Subsequent Offenses Student sent to principal with recommendation of 3 days suspension (parents and proper personnel notified in writing and/or by phone.) Possible recommendation to the transportation coordinator and/or superintendent and the Board of Education that the student be suspended 10 days and/or expelled for one full year. (Prior to expulsion, student would have opportunity for hearing.)

4.2 Level Two Consequences

(Violations included in Safe School Act will follow procedure adopted)

- 4.2.1 First Offense Sent to principal with recommendation of 3-day suspension from school bus (parents and proper school personnel notified in writing)
- 4.2.2 Second Offense Sent to principal with recommendation of 5-day suspension from school bus (parents and proper school personnel notified in writing.)
- 4.2.3 Third Offense Sent to principal with recommendation of suspension from school bus for 10 days (parents and proper school personnel notified in writing.)
- 4.2.4 Subsequent Offenses Transportation Coordinator and/or Superintendent of Schools will be notified, along with parents, that bus operator and principal recommend that the student be expelled for one full year. (Student would have opportunity for hearing prior to expulsion.)

Section 5 Consequences of Specific Violations by the Board of Education

The transportation coordinator/superintendent must provide written and if possible, telephone notice of discipline to the parent, including the opportunity for a hearing if expulsion is recommended.

- 5.1 Mandatory expulsion of not less than 12 consecutive months shall be implemented if student -
 - a. Possessed a deadly weapon
 - b. Assaulted the bus driver

- 5.2 Mandatory suspension and possible expulsion for up to one school year if the student -
 - a. Committed an act which would be a felony if committed by an adult
 - b. Possessed a controlled or illicit substance

- 5.3 Possible suspension and/or possible expulsion up to one year if the student
 - a. Threatened to injure or injured pupil, bus driver
 - b. Instigated, participated in, or prolonged a fight
 - c. Habitually violated rules or policies.

If the same pupil is excluded three times in one school year, the pupil is readmitted only after a conference with bus driver, principal, transportation coordinator and parent. School officials will agree on a course of discipline and inform parents. If disruptive behavior persists, upon the bus driver's request, the principal and/or transportation director may refuse the pupil riding privileges.

Incidents of a serious nature that may require action while en route must be handled through the exercise of the bus operator's best judgement in applying appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with County Board of Education policies and procedures. It is imperative that the bus driver explore and consider every reasonable alternative for handling any emergency situation before asking any pupil to leave bus while en route.

All recommendations for expulsion are made by the superintendent to the Board of Education, with the student and parents having the right to participate in a hearing prior to any action taken by the Board.

Adopted April 20, 1999
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