

BRANSON SCHOOLS

Parent/Student

Transportation Handbook

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Fifth Edition
Revised 6/15/2009

Parent/Student Transportation Handbook

I. Introduction

This handbook is an informational guide for students and parents. It outlines the basic policies, rules, and regulations governing student transportation.

II. Mission Statement

The Safe and Efficient Transportation of All Eligible Riders

For us to meet our mission requires several things.

- Safe and efficient buses
- Safe and courteous bus drivers
- Policies, procedures, regulations and rules
- Parent support and cooperation

In addition to the above, and just as important, we must have good order and discipline on the buses. To achieve this we have rules that students must adhere to. We also have policies and procedures to deal with students who violate the rules.

III General Procedures

Bus Passes. The Transportation Department uses a bus pass system to assist in accounting for the whereabouts of students on buses. It also informs the drivers of a new student on their bus that may require a different stop other than the normal route.

School administration offices issue bus passes to the students based upon the need. The school offices will not issue bus passes for:

- Students to go to the student's place of employment.
- Parties or functions at other student's homes
- After school lessons or activities
- Shopping

A parent/guardian must request a bus pass through the appropriate school office in writing, in person, or by phone. The request must include the following specific information:

- Student's name
- Effective date(s) for the bus pass. "As required or as needed" is not an acceptable effective date.
- Full street address where the student is going

- Contact phone number of either the parent/guardian or the responsible person where the student is going

New Students. When a student registers with the school, the school office will assign the student to the proper bus route. The school office will also provide approximate pick-up/drop-off times as well as location. If not, you can contact the Transportation Center at 334-7986 and we will provide this information.

Kindergarten and new students unfamiliar with bus riding are a serious concern for drivers. Parent or guardian must accompany young students to their bus stop for both morning pickup and afternoon drop-off.

Drivers are instructed to return students to the Transportation Center if they consider an unattended drop unsafe. (Transportation Center is located at 1010 Buchanan Rd)

New Routes / Route changes. Occasionally we must make changes to routes, pick-up/drop-off times, or pick-up/drop-off locations. If we make significant changes we will notify parents/guardians by letter.

Road Conditions. In order to provide safe and timely service, bus routes will not travel short, dead-end roads, cul-de-sacs, or driveways. Exceptions to normal pickup/drop-off locations will be considered on a case by case basis dependent on student age, safety, road conditions.

Bus Drivers report any road that is unsafe or is causing undue wear and tear on the bus to the transportation office. The transportation office will contact the agency responsible for the road maintenance and request the necessary repairs. If the road is in such disrepair, as to make bus travel unsafe or is causing undue damage to the bus, we will cease travel on the road until satisfactory repairs are completed.

School Closings. School officials will notify Springfield and local media any time Branson Public Schools are closed or are to be dismissed early due to weather or other emergencies. Listening to Hometown Radio 106.3 FM is the quickest way to find out if we canceled school or will dismiss early.

To keep school closings to a minimum and still maintain our margin of safety we establish Inclement Weather Routes. At the end of the first quarter of school, drivers will send information home with students about inclement weather routes. If we use the inclement weather route system we will notify local media. The local radio stations are your quickest source of information. If you have any questions please contact the transportation department, or talk with your driver.

Student Illness/Accident While on the Bus.

Bus drivers are instructed to take prompt action to minimize the effects of an accident or illness, and to provide first-aid as necessary. The driver will determine if an ambulance or other emergency personnel should be called. As soon as practical, a school employee will contact the parent/guardian and inform them of the situation. To avoid delays in contacting parents/guardians, you must keep telephone contact information current with the school office.

IV. Regular Routes

Route Assignments. When enrolling students or moving to a different address, insure the school office has the correct street address and contact telephone number.

Every student who rides a bus has certain obligations and responsibilities to insure they have a safe ride and do not lose their bus riding privileges. Those obligations and responsibilities are:

Getting on the bus: (National Safety Council)

- Be at the designated stop 5 minutes prior to the designated time.

- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic and avoid roughhousing or other behavior that can lead to carelessness. Do not stray onto streets.
- Line up away from the street or road as the school bus approaches.
- Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway.
- Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.

Behavior on the bus (National Safety Council)

- When on the bus, find a seat and sit down. Loud talking or other noise can distract the bus driver.
- Never put head, arms or hands out the window.
- Keep aisles clear—books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.
- Before you reach your stop, get ready to leave by getting your books and belongings together.
- At your stop, wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat

Getting off the bus. (National Safety Council)

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver can see you.

- Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the centerline of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times.
- **NEVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS!**

We encourage parents/guardians to discuss the above obligations and responsibilities with their student(s). Any violation or disregard for the above, or the rules posted in the front of the bus could result in a loss of riding privileges. The "10 Rules of the Bus" are:

- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom
- Be courteous, do not use profane language
- Do not eat or drink on the bus
- Keep the bus clean
- Cooperate with the driver
- Do not smoke or use tobacco products
- Do not be destructive
- Stay in your seat
- Keep all parts of the body inside the bus at all times
- Bus Drivers are authorized to assign seats and will establish and maintain a seating chart.

V Safe Schools Act

In 1996 the Missouri Legislature enacted the *Safe Schools Act* to address the issue of violence and violent behavior in our schools. The *Safe Schools Act* contains specific wording to extend the *Safe Schools Act* to the school bus.

The *Safe Schools Act* defines violent behavior as “the exertion of physical force by any student with the intent to do serious physical injury to another person.” It goes on to include “the threat of physical force to do serious physical injury to another person.”

We will not tolerate any acts of physical violence on the bus. Any student who displays violent behavior while on the bus will lose riding privileges for a period of time.

Transportation of Musical Instruments, Skateboards, Balls, etc.

Only those musical instruments which can be kept with the pupil and which do not occupy an unreasonable amount of space may be transported.

Prohibited from route transportation are:

1. Large musical instruments. (If you have questions, contact Transportation Director).
2. Skateboards.
3. Basketballs, soccer balls, etc.

4. Balloons.
5. Sleeping Bags.
6. Weapons of any kind.
7. Glass containers.
8. Food and drink.
9. Other unnecessary items as determined by driver or administration.
10. CD players, electronic games, etc., will not be allowed on K-4 routes. On 5/8 routes and 9-12 routes, CD players, Ipods, etc., will be allowed at the discretion of the driver.

VI Transportation Department Discipline Procedure

The transportation department will maintain good order, discipline, and safety on the school bus. Transportation guidelines and codes of conduct are designed to foster student responsibility, respect for the rights of others, and to ensure the orderly operation of the district's schools. General discipline guidelines and possible consequences are listed. These guidelines are derived from, and recommended by, the United States Department of Defense, Homeland Security. Since each incident is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the disciplinary action may be determined at the discretion of transportation director and/or principal.

Category A Minor Misconduct

1. Boarding or exiting the bus unsafely, to include crossing behind the bus.
2. No or improper bus pass.
2. Standing while bus is in motion or not properly seated.
3. Obstructing seats, door, or aisle.
4. Making excessive noise.
5. Public Displays of Affection.
6. Eating, drinking, chewing gum.
7. Using profane or obscene language or gestures.
8. Littering.

First notice: Oral or written warning to the student.
Driver will make contact with parent/guardian if student is uncooperative or if safety is involved.

Second notice: Oral and written warning, transportation director or driver supervisor will be advised and formal notice of conduct will be issued.

Third notice: 1-5 Day bus suspension.

Fourth notice: 5-10 Day bus suspension.

Fifth notice: Suspension of riding privileges and referral to principal for disciplinary action.

Category B Serious Infractions

1. Failure to comply (or disrespectful, talking back, lying) to bus driver or other adult.
2. Exchanging or refusing to show bus pass.
3. Horseplay or spitting.
4. Throwing objects at, within, or out of the bus.
5. Insulting, harassing, or bullying other students.
6. Sticking objects or body parts out of the window.
7. Damage, theft, or pilfering less than \$100.
8. Unauthorized operation of emergency exits.

First notice: 1-5 Day bus suspension.

Second notice: 10 Day bus suspension.

Third notice: 20 Day bus suspension and referral to principal for disciplinary action.

Fourth notice: Referral to administration for suspension of riding privileges for remainder of school year.

Category C Severe Offenses

1. Tobacco or alcohol use.
2. Sitting in driver's seat, tampering with controls.
3. Interfering with driver while operating vehicle
4. Fighting, hitting, biting, and pushing.
5. Vandalism, damage, or theft greater than \$100.
7. Any action that leads to a bus accident.

First notice: 10 Day bus suspension. Referral to principal for disciplinary action.

Second notice: 20 Day bus suspension. Referral to principal for disciplinary action.

Third notice: Referral to administration for suspension of riding privileges for remainder of school year.

Category D Criminal or Illegal Acts

1. Possession or use of weapons or other prohibited items.
2. Possession of illegal substances.
3. Lewd or indecent acts.
4. Threatening or causing injury to another person.
5. Bomb threat.

School suspension/expulsion proceedings initiated.

Possession of weapons or prohibited items, controlled substances, alcohol or other serious incidents will be reported to the appropriate administrator, superintendent, law enforcement, and may result in suspension or expulsion from school in addition to loss of bus privileges.

NOTE:

1. All rule infractions are cumulative for the school year.
2. All misconduct is evaluated on a case by case basis. Depending on severity, warnings, suspensions or expulsions may be deemed appropriate regardless of sequence or frequency of misconduct incidents.
3. Discipline of students with disabilities will be consistent with all state and federal provisions.

Any incident beyond minor misconduct will be recorded in student file, appropriate administrator will be notified. Parent/guardian will receive written notice and telephone contact if suspension is merited. Students will not be reinstated unless parent/guardian has signed notice. Suspensions apply to all district transportation.

Audio/Video Equipment

All regular route buses are equipped with digital video equipment which records activity on school buses. The technology is used to monitor bus activity of students as well as drivers. The information is strictly controlled and access is limited to authorized school officials and law enforcement due to issues of confidentiality.

All district policies listed below are located on the school website: www.branson.k12.mo.us, and in the central office.

If you have any questions about the bus rules or the discipline procedures, please contact the bus barn office at 334-7986.

Reference to specific board policies:

- Hazing and Bullying.....JFCF
- Weapons in School.....JFCJ
- Student Discipline.....JG
- Student Discipline.....JG-R