

## **BUS POLICY 2019**

The *Combined Schools Bus Committee* is updating bus records for 2018/2019, and aligning them with DFE procedures. From time to time there are behavioural problems on school buses which require action from the driver or in more serious cases, from the Principal or Senior Leader of the respective schools.

Behavioural Expectations and other policies are given for your information. Your cooperation is sought in reinforcing these expectations with your child/ren in the best interest of the drivers and all passengers.

We include all relevant local documentation and a number of forms that will need to be completed and returned to the school or centre that your eldest child attends or Bordertown High School. Please return as soon as possible.

### **PERMISSION TO TRAVEL ON SCHOOL BUS**

Automatic approval is granted to students who live more than 5kms from their school of right (ie the closest government primary school) and Secondary School students who live more than 5kms from their school of right.

#### **NON-ENTITLED students may include**

- **Students living within 5 kilometres of their 'school of right'**
- **Pre-school children (Kindergarten)**
- **TAFE students**
- **Interstate students**

#### ***Conditions of Bus Travel***

1. With the exception of students given approval on the basis of distance, permission to travel will be reviewed before commencement of each school year and you will be advised accordingly.
2. If bus travel becomes unavailable as a result of the annual review and you wish your child/ren to continue at their current school, you will be responsible for the necessary transport.
3. If bus travel becomes unavailable as a result of lack of room on the bus and you wish your child/ren to continue at school/kindergarten, you will be responsible for the necessary transport.
4. Any allowance payable to you for the use of a car to enable your students to link with a bus or to attend school will be calculated on the basis of travel to the nearest school bus route to your residence.
5. Bus decisions apply only to those named students. It implies no right to a brother or sister. Decisions are made on individual cases and do not extend to siblings.
6. Some approvals to travel may be given on special grounds, related to specific educational or physical needs.

**Students who do not meet the grounds for automatic approval will need to complete and return the *Permission for Transport of Ineligible Students on a School Bus* section.**

Bus monitors are chosen from secondary students who travel on the bus and have been appointed to assist drivers to maintain expected standards of behaviour of students while travelling on school buses.

## **BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS**

### **BUS RULES**

#### **Drivers rights and acceptable behaviour.**

- Drivers will not tolerate any student stopping them from driving a safe bus.
- Drivers will not tolerate any student stopping other students from having a safe, quiet bus ride.
- Drivers will speak to students courteously and will only accept courteous behaviour from students.

#### **Rules**

- No objects thrown in and out of the bus.
- Students to be seated all the time.
- Students to follow driver's directions.
- Hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- All parts of the body inside the bus.

#### **Consequences**

- ***Warning***

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- ***Shifting seats***

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- ***See Principal / Deputy Principal*** of the appropriate school and parents contacted. Further instances of inappropriate behaviour will result in suspension from using the bus for a period of time. Parents will need to make alternative transport arrangements.

#### **Positive Behaviour – at the discretion of the driver**

- Students will be able to move seats.
- Sitting up the back.
- Positive responses.

**Bus** rules are based on common sense and require cooperation between all parties to achieve a safe bus travel. This list is not exhaustive and cannot cover all situations. The key consideration will be student safety.

## **DUTY OF CARE POLICY**

The Minister ultimately owes a duty of care to every student. The Chief Executive, Departmental officers, principals, other school staff and some service providers take on this duty while students are present at government schools under supervision and while students are entering, travelling in, and alighting from Department school buses. Parents have a duty to take care for their children while they are getting to and from school or to a Department school bus stop and while at the stop.

In locally managing and providing school bus services, the duty of care to school bus students is evident in the following ways:

Principals of schools which have been allocated Departmentally owned and operated buses and/or who have contract-operated buses under their control are responsible for:

- The selection, approval and supervision of drivers.
- The formulation and management of a local school policy on student behaviour in buses.
- The preparation and advice to parents of contingency plans to be deployed in the event of a bus breakdown or other emergencies.
- Ensuring that only approved students or other approved persons travel on school buses.

Drivers of department owned and operated buses and drivers of contract-operated buses, amongst other duties and responsibilities must:

- Ensure the safety and behaviour of students while they are entering, travelling in and alighting from the bus. Any breach of the rules must be reported to the appropriate principal.
- Drivers must not, under any circumstances, put students off the bus as a disciplinary measure, or use any form of corporal punishment.
- Observe the requirements of the Road Traffic Act and Motor Vehicles Act, all signs, signals and road restrictions and be courteous to other road users.
- Use discretion in an emergency situation but on no account leave children unsupervised.
- Adhere strictly to the bus timetable (as amended from time to time by the principal/delegate).
- At all times while driving a bus is able to satisfy a zero blood alcohol reading.
- Not put children down at other than their normal stop without specific approval in advance from the principal.
- At all times observe local speed restrictions, exercise judgement and regulate speed according to road and/or weather conditions.

Generally speaking, every school bus driver owes a student a duty to take reasonable care to protect him or her from foreseeable risk or injury.

Parents are responsible for taking care of their children on their way from the home to the school bus stop, at the bus stop, and on their way from the bus stop to home after school. This duty may be manifested in many ways including:

- Allowing sufficient time to leave and meet children at the bus stop.
- Being on time at the pickup point where drivers will only wait 2 minutes.
- If no parent/guardian is at the bus stop, the child/ren will continue on the route back to the school, police station or the principal will be contacted if needed.
- Always parking the car on the bus stop side of the road.
- Always meeting their child/ren on the bus stop side of the road, unless communication via a letter to the principal requesting your child/ren to be off loaded with no supervision.
- Promptly notifying the principal of any perceived unsafe school bus situations or practices.

Some families residing five kilometres or more from the school bus service are approved private car travel allowances to transport their children to and from the service.

Occasionally, parents may experience difficulty in being at the school bus stop to meet their child, and are expected to arrange alternative duty of care. For example:

- Let the principal and driver know that a neighbour will meet their child at the school bus stop.
- Let the school know prior to the school bus leaving, that they will collect their child from the school at an acceptable time.
- Let the school know that their child may get off the school bus with a friend.

Where duty of care for a child at the school bus stop is vital but unachievable (no alternative) parents have the option of discussing a local school bus contingency plan with the principal who will then consult with the school bus driver and as required, the contractor. In developing these contingency plans, the parental duty of care to school children should not be significantly lessened or transferred, and the plan must be feasible and agreed on.

Any school bus drivers, who are concerned about a duty of care situation at the bus stop, should immediately notify the principal who will consult with those involved to resolve the situation.

## **COMBINED SCHOOL BUS FIRE POLICY**

### **Steps taken prior to a bushfire**

1. The school is to keep the CFS District Fire Officer, informed of current bus routes and safe refuge areas along each bus route.
2. CFS District Fire Officer to contact the high school in the event of a small local fire affecting a bus route or in the event of major fires which may affect numerous bus routes.
3. Parents, bus drivers, relief bus drivers and school staff to be informed of the Fire Policy in early February of each year.
4. Bus drivers to be constantly upgrading their knowledge of safe refuge areas and direction of all roads in relation to the bus route.
5. Displayed in a prominent position at the front of the bus is to be a list to include:
  - a) Map of the bus route
  - b) Student names
  - c) Pick up points
  - d) Time of each pick up
  - e) Safe refuge areas along the bus route
  - f) Emergency phone numbers, to include: Police, CFS District Fire Officer, High School
  - g) Fire Policy
6. Early in the school year, occupants of each bus are to practise a fire drill where all emergency procedures (eg. discuss the use of emergency windows, orderly exits and procedure in case the bus is hit by fire) are fully rehearsed.

### **Procedure when an advanced warning of a bushfire is available**

1. If the advice of the police, CFS District Fire Officer or school based personnel indicates that a fire may affect a bus route, students affected will remain at school. The required number of staff will remain on duty to supervise
2. On confirmation by the Fire Officer that a bus route is now safe, the bus will transport children home. Parents should avoid contacting the school, as children will be delivered home safely after the danger has passed.
3. CFS District Fire Officer to contact the high school on the state of the fire, the bus route affected and its location.
4. In extreme circumstances, the principal and/or deputy Principal will arrange to house and/or billet students until relief organisations can take over under the state or local disaster plan.
5. If at all possible, normal ring through policy will be made to contact parents and inform them of the school's intended action.
7. The Education Director to be informed of the school's intended action - either directly or through the police.

### **Unexpected bushfire - bus already delivering children**

1. Where unexpected fire threatens a route and a driver approaches obvious signs of a fire, the driver is to carefully reverse the route and return to a safe refuge area. Contact is to be made as soon as possible with the High School, principal or police.  
No attempt to continue on through a fire area will be undertaken unless a Fire Control Officer gives a clear direction.
2. In the event that homes to which children are being delivered by school bus are likely to be at risk by fire, drivers must ensure that children can be delivered into the hands of parents BEFORE allowing them to be off loaded. If parents are not at the bus stop, students must not be off loaded but kept on the bus and taken to a safe refuge.
3. **A safe refuge in order of priority is to be:**
  - a) A location well away from the fire where the bus, if required, can continue to reverse the bus route towards Bordertown
  - b) A substantial building where all bus occupants can shelter
  - c) A large, clear area. These may be: a fallow area, an oval, a hay-cut area, road cutting, parking bay or centre of the road.

4. **Should the fire front hit the bus:**

- a) Stop the bus on bare ground or the road way in an area as clear as possible of undergrowth/vegetation
- b) Ignition off, handbrake on, engine in gear, and headlights and hazard warning lights on
- c) Close windows and vents and block draughts
- d) Children to lie on floor
- e) Assess exits (ordinary or emergency) when fire front has passed
- f) Evacuate bus and locate the students in a previously burnt area
- g) Check bus before allowing children to re-enter
- h) Avoid travelling through smoke

5. **Should a fire start on the bus:**

- a) Stop the bus immediately
- b) Children to vacate the bus through the most accessible exit and to stand well clear of the bus
- c) Once safely evacuated drivers alert the appropriate authorities
- d) Fighting of the bus fire is only to be attempted by a bus driver when the safety of all personnel is ensured. The driver is to be aware of the extra danger associated with a fire in a petrol bus as opposed to a fire on a diesel bus.