

GLADEWATER I.S.D.

BUS RIDER SAFETY HANDBOOK



2020 - 2021

Dear Parents and Student Bus Riders,

The goal of this Bus Rider Handbook is to assist you in providing a safe and enjoyable experience for children who ride the school bus. Because the rules for discipline have changed, parents are encouraged to read and discuss the materials in this handbook with their children.

Riding a school bus is a privilege provided by the school district and should be treated as such in order to maintain that privilege. This service is provided to eligible riders in our district. An eligible rider is one who resides in the district and lives at least two miles from the school that they attend. An exception is made for students who do not have safe access to their respective schools. For example, students must cross a major highway, do not have sidewalks, etc. Designated bus stops will be determined; consequently, a rider may walk up to a quarter of a mile (.256 miles) to the stop or a quarter of a mile (.25 miles) or longer if there is not a safe or appropriate turn around for the bus. If a student chooses not to follow the rules and regulations of our buses, as stated in this handbook, they will find alternative transportation to and from school.

The school district is pleased to be able to provide transportation for its student population; however, proper behavior will be expected and students who do not follow the rules will be dealt with according to this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Please review the discipline consequences for each infraction committed by a student. Students are subject to the rules and regulations of the Student Code of Conduct and the Bus Rider Handbook. The expectations of the student on the bus are the same as in the classroom. If the school bus is the only way that your child has to get to school, please impress upon them the need for following the rules.

The information sheet at the back of this handbook must be completed and returned to the driver within three (3) days after your child receives it. Students who do not return this acknowledgement will not be allowed to board the bus until it is signed and returned.

Special note: Intentionally disrupting transportation of students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. (Class C Misdemeanor). Parents/guardians, will not confront the driver or other students by boarding the bus or blocking the bus in any manner. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me.

I sincerely appreciate your help and cooperation in the safe transportation of your children.

Sincerely,
Steve McFarland
Director of Transportation
Gladewater I.S.D.
903-845-4356

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

- No videotaping or recording of any manner is allowed by any student on the bus.
- Obey the instructions of the bus driver. At no time will a student act toward, or address comments to a bus driver in a disrespectful manner, or refuse to cooperate with the driver.
- Eating and/or drinking on any Gladewater I.S.D. bus is not allowed.
- Keep your hands to yourself and avoid making noises that would distract the driver or bother other passengers.
- Remain seated at all times while the bus is moving.
- Students will treat other students with respect while riding the bus.
- While in the bus, keep the aisles clear at all times.
- Help keep the bus neat and clean. Keep the aisle clear and items away from emergency exits.
- Board and depart the bus at designated stops *only*.
- Walk promptly to the bus.
- Only students who are eligible may be transported, and they must ride their assigned bus.
- Do not ask to ride home on another bus with a friend.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to the school or home if their child misses the bus.
- Wait until the bus pulls to a complete stop before standing up. Use the handrails when exiting the bus.
- Stay out of the danger zone next to the bus where the driver may have difficulty seeing you. Take five giant steps away from the bus and out of the danger zone until you can see the driver and the driver sees you. Never crawl under the bus!
- If you must cross the street after you get off the bus, wait for the driver's signal and then cross in front of the bus. Cross the street only after checking both ways for traffic.

PROCEDURES FOR WAITING FOR THE BUS

- Be at your stop five (5) minutes before scheduled pick-up time. The driver will not wait/honk.
- Stand on the sidewalk or back away from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- When the bus approaches form a line and be prepared to load immediately.
- Stand clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
- If you miss the bus, go home immediately. Do not chase the bus.
- Parents should instruct their student on what procedures to follow if the bus is missed.

LOADING THE BUS

- Do not push or shove.
- Use the handrail and steps properly.
- Go directly to your seat upon boarding the bus and face forward. Keep your hands, arms and head inside the bus at all times.

CONDUCT ON THE BUS

- Remain seated while the bus is moving.
- Do not change seats unless given permission by the driver.
- A student shall not refuse to sit in an assigned seat or deny another student a place to sit.
- Each student will be expected to remain seated for the duration of the trip, and remain seated until the bus has completely stopped and door opens.
- Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe situation.
- Scuffling, fighting and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language and gestures are forbidden.
- Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.
- Do not mark, cut or scratch any part of the bus. The person responsible for the vandalism will be responsible for repairing the damage. This may include monetary damages.
- Students will use emergency doors and exit controls only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.
- Students shall never attempt to operate the passenger door or other driver controls except in cases of extreme emergency.
- 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.

GETTING OFF THE BUS

- Stay seated until the bus is completely stopped.
- Use the handrail and take one step at a time when leaving the bus.
- Wait for your turn to leave the bus; pushing and crowding will only slow exiting and may cause an accident.
- You must have a signed note from your parent and your campus principal to get off at a stop other than your own. The note or a note from the campus must be given to the driver when boarding the bus.
- If any article drops or rolls near or under the bus, do not go after it or approach the bus. This is very dangerous because the driver may not see you. Wait until the bus is gone and traffic is clear before retrieving the article.

CROSSING THE STREET OR HIGHWAY

- All students living on the left side of the roadway shall exit the bus and 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. Students should never cross a 4-lane roadway.
- Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
- Never cross the road behind the bus. Do not go to mailboxes.
- Be alert for the vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading and unloading students.

ACCIDENTS OR EMERGENCIES

- Follow the driver's instructions.
- If you must leave the bus, stay in a group.
- The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation:
- The student nearest the door will open the door and hold it open.
- Leave the bus in single file as quickly as possible.
- Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
- Once outside the bus, follow the driver's instructions.

PROHIBITED ITEMS (*not allowed*)

- Tobacco.
- Live animals or insects.
- Glass containers.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Weapons, explosive devices, harmful drugs or chemicals.
- Any object (musical instrument, school project) too large to be carried by the student. All other items must be kept on the student's lap at all times.
- Matches or cigarette lighters.
- Food, candy, gum and drinks WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.
- Radios, CD players. (Only allowed at the discretion of the driver.)
- Any laser device (pointers, pens, etc...)
- Cell phones may be brought onto the bus but must be turned off and kept in the student's pocket or backpack for the duration of the bus ride.

DISCIPLINE

All school board policies that apply to student conduct and other student related activities apply to the school bus. Students will observe the same conduct as in the classroom. The bus driver will report all violations to the respective school Principal and Transportation Director. Steps and consequences for improper conduct on the school bus include the following:

1st Offense: Verbal warning.

2st Offense: Written warning resulting in bus probation.

3rd Offense: 5-day suspension from the bus.

4rd Offense: 10-day suspension from the bus.

5th Offense: 15-day suspension from the bus.

6th Offense: Suspension of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

A Gladewater ISD Administrator and/or Director of Transportation, with the Bus Driver, may call a parent conference at any time should serious misconduct occur. When deemed necessary, a parent conference may be required before a suspended student's bus privileges are reinstated. The Gladewater ISD Administrator and/or Director of Transportation have the authority to skip steps or enhance penalties for serious violations. Violations involving vandalism will require that the student provide restitution for repairs necessary to the equipment, or require that the student spend time cleaning the bus to remove graffiti, etc.

A suspension of bus privileges means that a student is suspended from any Gladewater ISD bus. Students found riding any school bus during suspension periods will have suspension periods increased, possibly up to suspension for the remainder of the school year.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO THE BUS DRIVER

Please return this page within three days of receipt. Students not returning this page within specified time will not be allowed to ride the bus.

Student's Name: _____

DOB: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Campus: _____ Grade: _____

Health Concerns: _____

Student's Address: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Telephone #s: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Other emergency contact:

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Student: I have received a copy of the Bus Rider Handbook and agree to abide by the guidelines in the handbook for the safety of all that ride and drive the buses.

Student's Signature Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: I have received a copy of the Bus Rider Handbook and certify that all information provided above is accurate of this date. I certify that I have read all the contents of this handbook to my child and they understand all guidelines addressed in this handbook.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Do Not Write Below This Line

Date Issued to Student: _____

Date Returned to Driver: _____

Bus #: _____

Driver's Initials: _____