



WESTERN SCHOOL DIVISION

SCHOOL BUS RIDERSHIP HANDBOOK

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

This booklet is intended to present an outline of the responsibilities shared by Western School Division, bus drivers, students, and their parents/guardians. Each group has unique duties and obligations that together form a basis for a safe and efficient transportation system.

Even if a student does not regularly use Western School Division's transportation system to get to school, they will probably ride the bus often for activities or field trips. It is important to ensure that all students are aware of and follow the rules as described here. Failure to follow these rules may jeopardize the safe operation of the buses and may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including suspension from bus privileges.

Whether you are a student or a guardian, please carefully read the complete booklet. Western School Division would like to thank you for your continued cooperation that enables us to provide the safest possible school bus system. If you have any questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact us at the number below.

Sincerely,

Adam Adamson
Transportation Supervisor
Western School Division
(204) 822-4448
E-mail: transportation@westernsd.mb.ca



Division of Responsibility

Western School Division:

- Principals are legally responsible for children from the time they leave home, including the bus trip.
- Discipline concerns will be dealt with by the school principals in cooperation with bus drivers.
- Provide clean, safe, and well maintained vehicles to transport students.
- Hire qualified, trained, concerned individuals to drive.
- Constantly monitor the busing system with an emphasis on improving safety by providing professional development training for all personnel involved, including drivers, mechanics, and administrators.
- Provide bus safety instruction to all students in the Division.

Drivers:

- Operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner.
- Ensure the orderly conduct of passengers and report unacceptable behavior to the principal of their school.
- Be prepared to handle emergencies.
- Provide maximum safety for students riding, loading, or unloading from the bus.
- Immediately report all items that require maintenance on the bus.

Pupils:

- Be aware that pupils are responsible for their own action and behavior.
- Know what the rules and procedures are and abide by them.
- Display proper respect for the rights and comfort of others.
- Realize that school bus transportation can be denied if they do not conduct themselves properly.
- Be aware that distracting the driver is potentially hazardous to their safety and others.
- Be familiar with emergency procedures.



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Parents/Guardians:

- Know the rules and encourage children to abide by them.
- Support safe riding practices.
- Support drivers and/or schools in disciplinary actions.
- Ensure that pupils are on time at bus pickup points.
- Ensure that pupils are properly clothed according to weather conditions.



Bus Rules

Loading:

1. Be at the pick-up point before the bus arrives.
2. Wait away from traffic, at least six feet from the road or street.
3. Avoid pushing, shoving or fighting.
4. **Do not run** to the bus. Wait until it has stopped and the door is open.
5. Board single file, using the handrail.
6. Go directly to your assigned seat.
7. Carry-on items shall be limited to those items that can safely be stored under the seat or held on pupils' knees. Skates shall be carried in equipment bags or provided with skate guards. Skateboards must be in equipment bags or securely fastened to backpacks. **Some** of the articles that may not be transported include: hockey sticks, live animals, large project boards, and large musical instruments. In all cases the driver will hold the right to determine if any item may be transported on a bus.

NOTE: In **no case** shall items be allowed in aisles.

Riding:

1. Talk to the driver only when it is absolutely necessary.
2. Refrain from loud or boisterous talking and do not use your phone to play music or videos unless you have permission from the driver.
3. Obtain the driver's permission before opening windows.
4. Eating and drinking on the bus **may be allowed on field trips only when the bus is not in motion and with the permission of the driver.**
5. Absolutely no items shall be thrown in or from the bus at any time.
6. Assist the driver in keeping the bus clean and neat at all times.
7. Whilst on route, remain seated.
8. When seated, sit facing forward only.



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Unloading:

1. Remain seated until the bus is stopped and the door is open.
2. A "Goodbye" or "Thanks" is a nice courtesy to the driver.
3. Exit slowly, using the handrail. Move away from the bus. Be aware of the "Danger Zones" around the bus and never re-approach the bus for any reason.
4. If crossing the roadway is necessary use the following procedure:
 - A. **WALK** away from the bus and about ten feet in front of the bus.
 - B. **CHECK** with the driver - watch for his signal to cross.
 - C. **WALK** across the roadway.
 - D. **CHECK** for traffic in both directions as you reach the edge of the bus before continuing to cross.

ALWAYS REMEMBER: NOT ALL VEHICLES OBEY THE STOP SIGNALS ON THE BUS.

NOTES:

- Students shall not board or exit a bus at any point on the route other than designated approved locations except in the case of emergencies.
- Only those students assigned to a bus will be allowed to ride. Any student within the Western School Division may be transported on any Western School Division bus. These arrangements must be made by the parent with the Transportation Supervisor, prior to bus use and are subject to space availability.
- Requests for special services due to medical or other reasons shall be made to the Supervisor of Transportation at the Division Office.



Storm Policy

The School Division may, under extreme conditions cancel certain routes or all bus routes.

When bus routes are cancelled, all K-12 classes for that day are also cancelled.

Bus Route Cancellation Procedure:

- Buses may be cancelled due to any one or a combination of the following factors, bearing in mind that student safety is of prime concern:
 - a) Low temperatures or high wind chill values (at or below -45°C)
 - b) Poor visibility
 - c) Unsafe road conditions (Manitoba Highways or driver recommendations)
- Transportation Supervisor or his designate shall be responsible to initiate the route cancellation procedure.
- It is expected that whenever possible, cancellations will be announced by 7:00 AM. However, a cancellation may take place at any time if conditions deteriorate suddenly. In the case of late cancellation, **drivers** should attempt to contact parents on their route.
- Bus cancellations will be announced on the local radio stations: The Eagle, CFAM, CKMW, CJEL, CBC, and CJOB, as well as PembinaValleyOnline.com.
- Drivers have the authority to cancel all or part of the route if, in their opinion, the safety of the students may be compromised. In this instance, drivers will attempt to contact parents on the route by phone.
- All buses are radio equipped and constantly monitored.

This document last updated: August 2025.