

WESTERN SCHOOL DIVISION SCHOOL BUS RIDERSHIP HANDBOOK

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

This booklet is intended to present students and parents with an outline of the responsibilities of the School Division, the bus driver, the students and the parents. Each group has unique duties and obligations that together form a basis for a safe and efficient transportation system.

Even though a student does not regularly use the transportation system of Western School Division to get to school, he or she 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 set down for them. Failure to follow these rules may jeopardize the safe operation of the buses, and may result in disciplinary actions including suspension from bus privileges.

Whether you are a student or a parent 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,

Supervisor of Operations
Western School Division
(204) 822-4448
E-mail: divoff@westernsd.mb.ca

Division of Responsibility

Western School Division Responsibilities:

1. Principals are legally responsible for children from the time they leave home, including the bus trip, thus discipline concerns will be dealt with by the school principals in co-operation with bus drivers.
2. Provide clean, safe, and well maintained vehicles to transport students.
3. Hire qualified, trained concerned individuals to drive.
4. Constantly monitor the busing system always with an emphasis on improving safety by providing professional development training for all personnel involved, i.e. drivers, mechanics and administrators.
5. Provide bus safety instruction to all students in the division.

Drivers' Responsibilities:

1. To operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner.
2. Ensure the orderly conduct of passengers and report unacceptable behaviour to the principal of his or her school.
3. Be prepared to handle emergencies.
4. Provide maximum safety for students riding on, loading or unloading from the bus.
5. Report immediately all items that require maintenance on the bus.

Pupils' Responsibilities:

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

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

1. Know the rules and encourage children to abide by them.

2. Support safe riding practices.
3. Support drivers and/or schools in disciplinary actions.
4. Ensure that pupils are on time at bus pick up points.
5. 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 the 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 cannot be transported include hockey sticks, live animals, large project boards or large musical instruments. In all cases the driver will 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 use your phone to play music/videos only with the approval of the driver.
3. Obtain 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.

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.

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 driver, prior to bus use and are subject to space availability.

Storm Policy:

The School Division may under extreme conditions cancel bus routes. When bus routes are cancelled all K-12 classes for that day are also cancelled.

1. BUS ROUTE CANCELLATION PROCEDURE:

- a. *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:*
 - i. *low temperatures or high wind chill values (at or below -45 Wind Chill Index).*
 - ii. *poor visibility*
 - iii. *unsafe road conditions (Manitoba Highways or driver recommendations)*
- b. *The Supervisor of Operations or his designate shall be responsible to initiate the route cancellation procedure.*
- c. *It is expected that whenever possible cancellations will be announced by 7:00AM. 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.*

2. Bus cancellations will be announced on the local radio stations, 88.9 FM, CFAM (1250 AM), and CFYI(93.5 FM), CBC (990) CJOB (680).
3. 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 telephone.
4. All buses are radio equipped and constantly monitored.

Special Services:

Requests for special services due to medical or other reasons shall be made to the Supervisor of Transportation at the Division Office.