

TO: PARENTS OF CHILDREN RIDING SCHOOL BUSES
FROM: BOTETOURT COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

We would like to ask your assistance in providing a SAFE and EFFICIENT transportation program for your child. We are enclosing a copy of REGULATIONS FOR PUPILS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES, and request that you and your child read this. It is important that you understand the regulations governing the conduct of your child while riding a Botetourt County School Bus. Please encourage our child to abide by them in the interest of his or her safety.

The Principal has the authority to discipline pupils attending public schools and has the authority to remove from school buses pupils who cause disciplinary problems which pose a hazard to the safety of other pupils or the bus driver.

TRANSPORTATION

The school system operates 60 buses that transport approximately 4,000 students from home to school and back home each day. School buses in Botetourt County travel over 750,000 miles a year. The Operations Manager and staff are available to answer school transportation questions and provide additional information at 473-8259, (fax 473-8375).

RIDE SAFELY

Your bus driver has the responsibility of the safety of all students assigned to his or her bus. The driver can only perform this responsibility with your cooperation and courtesy. This information is to provide parents and students with bus safety guidelines. It is our aim to insure that the health, safety, welfare and educational opportunity of each transported student is thoroughly protected.

It is our hope that these guidelines will prove to be a useful resource for assuring your child a safe, comfortable and pleasant school bus ride throughout the school year.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

Each principal is responsible for carrying out a school bus safety program and has jurisdiction over the conduct of students while they are being transported. Students must be made aware of the following school bus safety procedures:

A. **Meeting the Bus**

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes prior to loading the bus.
2. Take the safest route to assigned bus stop.
3. Wait in a safe place off the main road or street.
4. Wear bright clothes if there is rain, snow or fog.
5. Stand back from the road or street. Give the bus driver room to stop.
6. DO NOT trespass on private property or litter the premises.
7. DO NOT play in the roadway or street.
8. DO NOT sit on the curb.
9. DO NOT run toward a moving bus as it approaches the bus stop or loading zone at the school.
10. DO NOT bring oversized items, live animals or glass objects on the bus.
11. If a student is late to a bus stop, the bus will not stop at an unscheduled stop for a parent to transfer the student to the bus.

B. **Boarding the Bus**

1. Students that must cross the road to board a bus, must wait until the bus driver signals to cross the road at least 10 feet in front of the bus. **NEVER BEHIND IT.**
2. When entering the bus, pupils must enter in an orderly fashion and in accordance with instructions from the bus driver.
3. Let younger students enter the bus first.
4. Go directly to your assigned seat and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
5. DO NOT tamper with the bus or any of its equipment, including emergency equipment.
6. Always be respectful of the driver.

C. **Conduct on the Bus**

1. Remain seated until the bus reaches its destination and comes to a complete stop.
2. Talk only in a normal voice.
3. Keep the aisle clear of feet, arms and other objects.
4. Hold books, coats and all other objects in your lap.
5. Vandalism to the bus will be paid for by those responsible and the School Board Regulations regarding parent liability will be enforced.
6. Be quiet at railroad crossings so the bus driver can hear railroad warning signals.
7. State regulations prohibits the use of any tobacco product on the bus at any time.
8. No change in buses may be made without written request from the parent and approved by the school principal.
(Bus passes must be obtained from the Principal's office)
9. DO NOT fight, scuffle or throw objects inside the bus or at the bus stop.
10. DO NOT extend arms, legs or head out of the bus.
11. DO NOT talk to bus driver while the bus is in motion except in an emergency.
12. DO NOT bring glass containers, cans, water pistols, pea shooters or weapons of any type on the bus.

13. DO NOT throw paper or other litter on the bus floor or out of the bus windows.
14. DO NOT use profane or indecent language.
15. DO NOT bring pets and animals on the bus at any time. Animals brought on the bus can create disturbances which could result in an unsafe driving situation.
16. All conduct rules and guidelines of your school apply to the bus.
17. NO eating or drinking on the bus.

D. **Leaving the Bus**

1. Pupils must remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
2. Pupils are to leave the bus in an orderly manner. Pupils in the front seats will depart first.
3. Pupils must not loiter around the bus.
4. Pupils must leave the bus at their regular stop.
5. Once a student has boarded the bus, he or she is under the jurisdiction of the school and must not leave the bus or school property without proper permission.
6. If pupils must cross the highway, they are to do so only at the front of the bus and at a distance of at least 10 feet in front of the bus. They must not cross until the driver has signaled that it is safe to do so.
7. Do not cross road to go to mailbox while the bus is stopped.

E. **Emergency School Schedule Changes**

Inclement weather, power failure or any other emergency may result in closing schools, delayed opening or early dismissal. Radio and television stations announce schedule changes as soon as possible.

.....parents and students are asked not to call the local school or administrative offices for this information.

Information about school closings or delays may be obtained by going online to WDBJ, WSET, WSLS.com or TV channels 7, 10 or 13. Automated telephone messages will be sent to parents and employees as well.

F. **Regulations For Pupils Riding School Buses**

1. The rules and regulations listed are for your information and your child's benefit. Bus drivers are instructed to report to the school principal any infractions of these rules and regulations.
2. The driver will assign seats and may change this assignment when deems desirable.
3. While Botetourt County Public Schools (BCPS) recommends that a parent/guardian or adult designee be present with all elementary age students at the bus stop, BCPS has adopted a new bus policy which states that a parent/guardian or adult designee of elementary school children in grades Pre K-2 must be at the bus stop when the child is exiting the bus.
4. Video cameras may be used on the school bus at any time. Video cameras are used by the principals to observe student conduct on the bus.
5. **Riding a school bus is a privilege.** Should any child be reported to the school principal, the principal will be responsible for the disciplinary action including loss of bus transportation until the parents and principal can arrive at an understanding.