

MINERAL WELLS ISD TRANSPORTATION  
SAFE RIDER HANDBOOK  
2017-2018



“TRANSPORTING THE FUTURE”

Mineral Wells ISD Transportation Department  
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## General Rules

1. Obey the instructions of the bus driver at all times.
  - a. At no time will a student act toward or address comments to the bus driver in a disrespectful manner, or refuse to cooperate with the driver's instructions.
2. Be courteous to everyone at all times.
  - a. Bus driver
  - b. Other students
  - c. School staff
3. Board and leave the bus at your *assigned and designated* bus stop only.
4. Students ARE NOT PERMITTED to ride home from school with friends or family unless a note from the school accompanies the student as they board the bus.
5. All students must ride their assigned bus to and from their assigned bus stop.
  - a. Example: Student who is assigned to Bus X may not ride home with a friend or relative on Bus A.
6. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to provide transportation TO/FROM school if a student misses the bus.
7. School Bus Referrals are utilized as a form of communication from the bus driver to the parent / guardian, and will be discussed in detail in another portion of this handbook.
8. Electronic Devices are HIGHLY discouraged for all students, as the bus driver cannot effectively police their use. Students must be able to hear communications from the driver at all times.

## Safe Rider's Code of Conduct While on the Bus

1. Go directly to your seat, and remain seated for the duration of the route. Do not stand or change seats while the bus is in motion.
2. Students are not permitted to refuse to sit in an assigned seat, or to deny any student a place to sit.
3. Normal conversation is permitted; any loud noises may distract the driver and create an unsafe condition.
4. Fighting, scuffling, horseplay, use of obscene, vulgar or profane language or gestures are forbidden.
5. Do not throw or display any objects inside or outside of the bus at any time.
6. Do not mark, cut, scratch, or tear any part of bus seats. Any person found responsible for damages will pay vandalism costs and may lose riding privileges.
7. Emergency doors, windows, exits and hatch controls should only be used during emergency evacuations, and upon instruction by the driver.
8. Students shall never operate the passenger door control, nor any other driver controls, except in an emergency, upon the instruction of the driver or if the driver is in some manner incapacitated.
9. Students shall face forward with their feet on the floor in front of them at all times while the bus is in motion.

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10. Students must keep seats and the aisle of the bus free and clear of any obstructions
  - a. Legs / feet
  - b. Backpacks / book bags
  - c. School / Art projects
  - d. Athletic equipment
  - e. Musical instruments
  - f. Etc...
11. Students shall follow ALL MWISD dress codes while riding the bus.
12. All other applicable School Rules apply while riding the bus.

## **Prohibited Items**

1. Tobacco products of any kind
  - a. Cigarettes / Cigars
  - b. Vapor Cigs / E-Cigs
  - c. Smokeless / dip / chewing tobacco
2. Animals or insects, dead or alive
3. Glass containers
4. Alcoholic products
5. Weapons, explosive devices, any flammable items, drugs, or chemicals
6. Matches or cigarette lighters (lighted or not)
7. Flash paraphernalia or laser lights may not be in use while on the bus.
8. Any object (fundraisers, school projects, art projects, crutches, etc) too large to be carried safely by the student, or held in the student's lap. Objects may not take up a seat space. Band instruments will be left up the Transportation Department's discretion.
9. All Food or Drink – eating and drinking on the bus is a choking hazard.
10. Students are not permitted to use any type of recording device (including cell phones) while riding on the bus
  - a. Video Camera recording devices
  - b. Still picture recording devices
  - c. Audio recording devices
11. Any item that may be used as a weapon, i.e., hammers, screw drivers, bats etc...

## School Bus Stops

### Designated School Bus Stop

Designated School Bus stops must meet strenuous criteria as set by the State. Mineral Wells ISD Transportation Department ensures that all our designated school bus stops meet these criteria.

Mineral Wells ISD school buses will not enter:

- dead-end streets
- Cul-de-Sacs, *unless safe, and deemed necessary for turn-around of the bus route*
- Into / onto personal property or private roads

### Authorized School Bus Stop

Students may only ride the school bus to and from their authorized bus stop. Authorized bus stops are established within a reasonable walking distance of the *home* of every student eligible for transportation services. Mineral Wells ISD Transportation has set the walking distance for elementary student bus stops up to .25 (1/4) mile from home, and for secondary students up to .50 (1/2) mile from home. Any stop that goes three or more days without a rider may be subject to removal. A request for reinstatement of a stop must be submitted in writing and may take up to five days to be added to a route.

## Procedures for Loading / Unloading the Bus

### General

1. Students must arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. This ensures the student will not be missed due to the bus arriving a little earlier than the designated pick up time.
2. Students must be in clear sight for the approaching bus driver to see. Driver will not stop, wait, or honk for students who are not clearly visible.
3. Students should stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway about 10 feet. In darkened areas it is a good practice to use reflective markers or flashlights so the driver can see the student.
4. If a student misses the bus he/she should go home immediately. It is the parent's / guardian's responsibility to transport the student to school. Parents / guardians should have a backup plan in place if the student misses the bus.
5. Students must be able to get on and off the bus without assistance. Students temporarily using crutches, wheelchairs or walkers are in need of special assistance and may be assigned to a special needs bus while such devices are being used. Parents/guardians must make arrangements with the MWISD Transportation office PRIOR to day of transport.

## Loading

1. As the bus approaches form a line and be prepared to load. Stand clear of the bus, at least 10 feet, until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to board. NEVER walk toward the bus as it is still approaching.
2. Use steps and handrails properly. Do not jump over steps.
3. Go directly to your assigned seat. Students are typically assigned seats by grade level. However, at their discretion, the bus driver may assign other seating arrangements.

## Unloading

1. Stay seated until bus comes to a complete stop. Gather all personal items, and walk to the front of the bus. Walk only on the floor.
2. Use the handrails, and take one step at a time. Do not jump from steps.
3. Wait your turn – no pushing or shoving. Students must use the “zipper” method for unloading. That is, they must wait for the students in seat(s) in front of them to get up and leave their seat before they get up and walk down the aisle.
4. Allow “crossers” to exit bus first. Students who must cross the street in front of the bus are “crossers”. When it is your turn, exit the bus and walk directly away from the bus, at least 10 feet away, in the straightest path to your home. NEVER return to the bus without gaining the attention of the bus driver first, and only return to the passenger door.

## Crossing the Street or Highway

1. MWISD always tries to accommodate students being picked up on the right side of the roadway. However, if it is necessary to cross the street, students shall exit the bus and walk 15 feet in front of the right bumper of the bus on the sidewalk, if available, and wait for the driver to signal the student it is safe to cross.
2. Check both ways before crossing and always go directly straight across the street.
3. NEVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS. It is against the law.  
See diagram 1

## Danger Zones

The DANGER ZONE is the area immediately surrounding the school bus, extending a minimum of 10 feet on all sides. The area of greatest danger is immediately in front of the front bumper and right wheel. Teach your student(s) “If you can touch the bus, you are TOO CLOSE”, and “If you can’t see the driver as you cross the street in front of the bus, you are TOO CLOSE!”  
See diagram 2

## Safety tips for parents and students

1. Never stop to pick up anything that falls in front of the bus bumper, is swept under the bus, or that is in front of the wheels. Notify the driver, and s/he will retrieve the dropped item, or instruct the student to retrieve it.

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2. Students should always watch for moving vehicles when exiting a stopped school bus, and/or crossing the street. Vehicles do not always stop for a school bus with red lights flashing, even though it is the law to do so.
3. Have children put everything they carry in a backpack or school bag so they won't drop things along the way.
4. Secure any loose drawstrings on clothing or bags so they won't catch on the handrails or bus door.
5. Have them wear bright, contrasting colors so the drivers can see them more easily during early hours.
6. Make sure they leave home on time so they can be at the bus stop a minimum of 10 minutes before the bus arrives. Running to the bus stop after it arrives is dangerous.
7. NEVER run to catch the bus.

## Cross Over Procedure

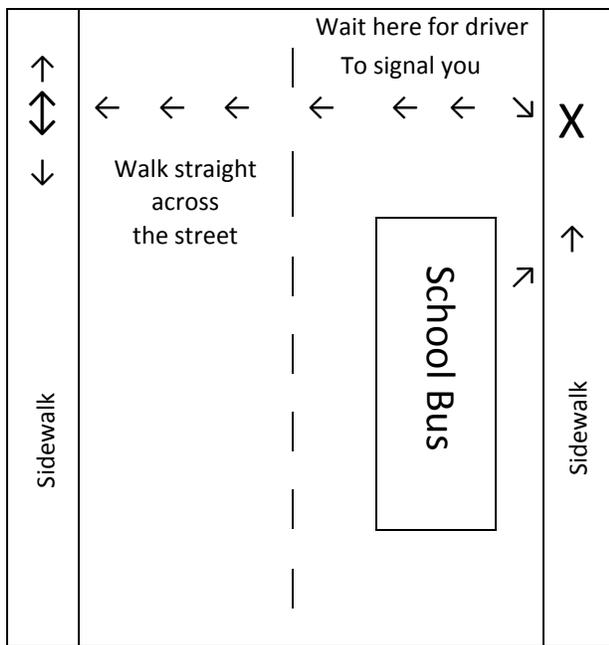


Diagram 1

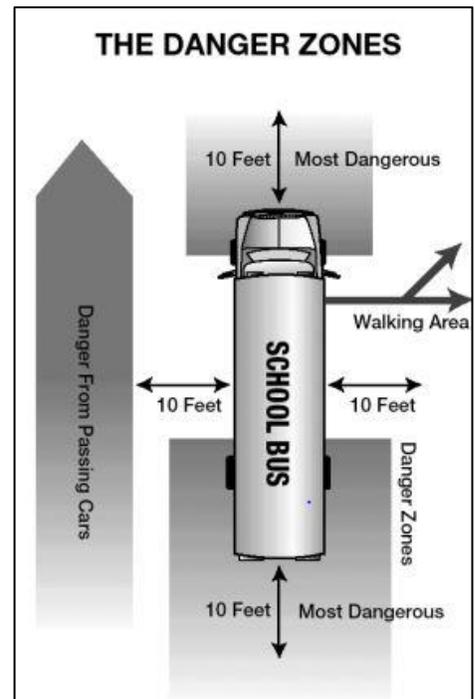


Diagram 2

## Student Discipline

The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and most school rules apply while riding the school bus. All laws, TEA regulations, and school board policies that apply to student conduct during other student activities apply to the school bus.

Drivers will effectively maintain proper control of the bus environment. Proper environment is critical to safe operation of the school bus. Many methods are used to observe, monitor, and ensure the proper environment on the school bus. The Transportation director will assist the drivers in administering discipline, utilizing video footage as deemed necessary, and with the assistance from the bus driver's referrals.

### **BUS SAFETY REFERRALS**

In most circumstances students are given several chances to correct their behavior before receiving a Bus Discipline Referral. Drivers utilize several options:

1. Verbal correction
2. Remedial instruction
3. Move the student to another seat, usually closer to the front near the driver
4. Have an administrator from campus have a conversation with the student

As a last resort drivers will write Bus Discipline Referrals:

**Warning Letter:** In most cases a written referral and warning letter will be given to the student, and the student is expected to give it to their parent/guardian; Parents/Guardians are asked to sign the copy of the letter and return to the driver the next day.

**Suspension of Bus Riding Privileges:** If a student continues to violate the safe rider's code of conduct they may have their bus riding privileges suspended up to the entire semester. If suspension is administered, the Transportation office personnel will notify the parent of suspension date via a phone call. A letter of suspension will also be sent home with the student. **This is NOT a suspension from school. Students must still attend classes.**

**Zero Tolerance:** Students violating Zero Tolerance policies will receive a written referral, and a phone call will be made to inform Parents/Guardians the student is immediately suspended from school bus riding privileges. **Students may be expelled from school bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.**

## Accidents or Emergencies

1. Students must remain calm and follow the driver's instructions at all times.
2. Remain in your seat until receiving further instructions. Seating charts are required by the police for their investigation.
3. If an evacuation is necessary students must stay in a group, remain calm and quiet, and walk to a safe location, away from the danger zone.
4. The following procedures from the Texas Education Agency will be used for evacuation of the school bus in an emergency situation:
  - a. Two students assigned by the driver will open and hold the evacuation door, and assist other students off the bus as necessary.
  - b. Students will leave the bus in a single file as quickly and quietly as possible.
  - c. Evacuations will start with the seat closest to the exit being utilized for evacuation.
  - d. Walk to a safe place at least 100 feet (approximately 40 paces) off the road, in the direction of oncoming traffic. This keeps students from being hit by debris if another vehicle collides with the bus.
5. NO student will be released from the bus until authorized by emergency responders or a school district official. Parents must show proper ID to emergency response teams to take a student from the scene of an accident.

## Bad Weather Days / School Bus Schedules

Any day that school is being held school buses will operate, to include late starts. Many sources are available to determine if school is being closed or delayed due to bad weather:

- [www.mwisd.net](http://www.mwisd.net)
- Radio stations
  - WBAP (820 AM)
  - KPLX (99.5 FM)
- Television stations
  - KDFW 4 - Fox
  - KXAS 5 - NBC
  - WFAA 8 - ABC
  - KTVT 11 – CBS

If school is delayed buses will run according to the delayed time. If school is on a two hour delay, expect your students' bus to arrive at the authorized bus stop two hours later than normal. Example: if your student typically catches the bus at 7:05 a.m., you can expect the bus to be at your stop at 9:05 a.m.

## **Restricted Areas**

Mineral Wells ISD buses will not enter dead-end streets, Cul-de-Sacs, nor personal property, except when used for route turn-around, which requires special approval by the MWISD Transportation Director.

## **Video Surveillance**

**All Mineral Wells ISD school buses are equipped with audio/video observation systems. The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FFERPA) prohibits a school district from allowing parents to view videos.**

## **Professional School Bus Drivers**

Mineral Wells ISD School Bus Drivers are professionals and are expected to conduct themselves as professionals at all times. As professionals they will expect the same courtesy, respect and consideration from all students and parents in return.

All School Bus Drivers are certified through the Texas Department of Public Safety with at least a Class B CDL, with P (passenger) and S (school bus) endorsements. All school bus drivers are required to take annual DOT physicals, and are subject to random drug and alcohol testing at any time. All drivers have successfully completed a 20-hour school bus driver training course approved the State of Texas, and administered through the TEA. Mineral Wells ISD school bus drivers are also required to attend periodic safety meetings where they receive on-going education of numerous safety related topics, laws, policies and procedures.

## **Disruption of Transportation Services**

A person commits a class C misdemeanor if he/she intentionally disrupts, prevents or interferes with the lawful transportation of students in a school district owned vehicle.

## **ADDENDUMS & REVISIONS**

This page allows for any addendums or revisions as may be deemed necessary. Please consult with the online version of this handbook for any changes that may be made at any time.