

School Bus Rider's Safety Handbook



Snook Independent School District
P.O. Box 87
Snook, TX 77878
(979) 272-8307

Dear Parents / Guardians and Bus Riders:

We are providing this School Bus Rider's Safety Handbook so all concerned will be familiar with our expectations and the transportation procedures. SISD offers the privilege of bus transportation for all eligible student riders. Eligibility is generally determined by distance from the home campus (more than 2 miles) and by application of Board policy. Our bus service should enhance the learning experience of each student rider. Every effort will be made to provide safe, comfortable and pleasant transportation service, while maintaining an appropriate level of efficiency.

We ask that you read and discuss the contents of this handbook with your student rider to promote a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations. Effective transportation service requires appropriate actions by bus drivers and staff, school administrators, students and parent / guardians. We will not allow anyone to stop the District from providing a safe, comfortable and pleasant riding experience.

Thank you for your cooperation and support regarding the care and safety of all our children.

Kim Giesenschlag

Kim Giesenschlag
Superintendent

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General Information:

School Bus Drivers

School bus drivers are selected, hired and trained following a rigorous selection criteria and a thorough criminal history background check. All SISD school bus drivers complete the Texas Department of Public Safety School Bus Driver Certification Course. Each driver has also earned a Class B Commercial Driver License. Bus drivers are required to pass a pre-employment drug test along with an annual physical and are subject to random drug and alcohol testing.

Every driver has successfully completed the required school bus driver training course as well as periodic safety training. SISD school bus drivers are professionals and are expected to conduct themselves as such at all times. They work hard to earn the trust and respect of parents/guardians and students. As a result of their dedication and professionalism, they will expect courtesy and proper respect and consideration from all students and adults.

Eligible Riders

Generally, students who reside more than 2 miles from their school (as measured along public roadways) are eligible for state-funded bus transportation. Additionally, selected neighborhoods less than the 2-mile funding limit have been designated for bus service due to hazardous walk route to the campus. Students within these areas will also be provided bus service.

Restricted Areas for Buses

Snook ISD buses will not enter dead-end streets or enter personal property except when approved by administration and the transportation department. Use of private property or gated communities requires prior concurrence by the property owner(s) or Home Owners Association.

Proper Seating

School buses are designed with many specific features for the safety of students. A major design factor is the compartment formed by each seat, which protects the students sitting on that bench seat. In order for this compartmentalization to work properly, proper seating is required. While seated, each student should face forward; the student torso should be facing forward at all times; the student's back should be flat against the back of the seat and the student's bottom should be flat on the seat. The student should be **sitting straight back and upright against the seat**. Both feet and legs should be kept in front of their body. **See the diagram below.**



Video Cameras

Video cameras (with audio) may be utilized on Snook ISD school buses. Federal (FERPA) regulations designate these video recordings as part of the student's education record and therefore prohibit the viewing of these video tapes by the general public. School or law enforcement personnel may use this information as safety training material and / or evidence of bus safety rule violations.

Extracurricular Trips

1. All bus safety rules apply to riding the bus to school-sponsored events.
2. The bus driver has overall responsibility for the bus and safety of all passengers; however, the sponsor will be expected to address student behavior issues and cleanliness.

Weather Conditions

School buses operate on any day that school is being held. Currently four options exist on bad weather days.

1. School starts on time & ends on time.
2. Early dismissal: On days of early dismissal due to weather conditions, schools must determine whether a child has appropriate supervision at home. If the campus puts a student onto the bus, that student will be delivered to their neighborhood bus stop/drop off point.
3. Delayed start: If school is delayed due to weather, the buses will run two hours later than normal unless specified differently in the school notification.
4. Cancel school: A decision to cancel classes for the day will be made by 6:00 a.m. and KBTX Channel 3 will be notified immediately. **Please check the SISD Website and listen for the school callout/notification messages for any school closings or make up days.**

Inclement Weather:

The SISD Administration will keep the Transportation Department and the school district notified during inclement weather conditions.

1. As circumstances dictate, buses may be detained at a campus or diverted to a safer location. Delivery of students will continue as appropriate.
2. Students should follow the driver's instructions; remain calm and quiet so the driver can receive proper safety information over the district radio system.
3. During these events administration will contact parents/guardians to inform them that the students are safe and the bus is being delayed.
4. Parents are encouraged to meet the bus at their student's designated bus stop to allow for orderly delivery of all students. However, meeting the bus at other locations is disruptive and inappropriate.

Parent's Responsibility:

1. Read and discuss with your student(s) the contents of this bus rider's handbook, if you have any unanswered questions or concerns contact administration at 979-272-8307 for assistance.
2. Please inform your student(s) of the bus number, time and location of their bus stop. This information is available by contacting the Transportation Department at 979-272-8307.
3. Please have your student(s) at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the actual loading time. If the bus is 20 minutes late, please have your students return home and contact the Transportation department at 979-272-8307.
4. Please discuss what a privilege it is to ride the school bus and how it may help your family. Student attire and behavior on the school bus is the same as in the classroom.
5. Remind your student to tell you, a teacher, a principal, or the bus driver if they have a concern about a situation on the bus.

6. Report serious issues that occur on the bus or at the bus stop to the Transportation Department or contact your campus Principal at 979-272-8307.
7. You are responsible for the transportation of your student(s) to and from school during suspension from the bus. If a student does not attend school during this time, the absence is unexcused.

Transportation Department Responsibility:

1. Maintain current bus schedules and rider information of all buses for the District.
2. Meet with the drivers at the beginning of each school year and as needed throughout the year to discuss loading procedures, safety concerns, driving techniques, and student management.
3. Investigate all complaints and safety concerns.
4. Contact parents when un-safe behavior is reported.
5. Confer with students, parent, school administrator, and bus driver when appropriate.
6. Forward all Code of Conduct violations to the appropriate campus administrator.

Campus Administrator Responsibility:

1. Process and assign consequences on all Code of Conduct violations.
2. Process and assign consequences as outlined in a student's IEP or Behavior Intervention Plan on all Special Needs concerns.
3. Assist with contacting parents or enforcing consequences when appropriate.
4. Assist with conferences between bus drivers, parents and transportation when needed.

Special Needs Transportation:

1. In order to qualify for Special Needs transportation, the campus ARD committee must determine that special transportation is needed as a related service. The Transportation Department must have the "Transportation Request Form" filled out after the ARD meeting prior to services starting.
2. Regular Education students with temporary medical conditions or injuries may qualify for temporary Special Needs Transportation. Please check with Campus Administrators for more information.

Expectations of All Student Riders:

1. All Student Riders are expected to follow the guidelines of the Student Code of Conduct, the procedures contained in this handbook, and the instructions provided by the School Bus Driver.
2. All Student Riders are expected to board and exit the bus at their designated pick up or delivery point closest to the student's home. **Routes/pick up locations will not be altered due to students missing their designated pick up without written consent between the Transportation Coordinator, administration and parent/guardian.** Any changes to a pick up/drop off must be in writing by the student's parent or guardian and approved by the Transportation Department and campus office **before** the student will be allowed to exit at another bus stop. Daily changes are submitted through each campus office and the office will relay the information to the student(s) and Laura Sebesta, Transportation Coordinator.
3. All students are expected to be on their side of the street at the designated bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time. The school bus will approach the designated pick up point and utilize the amber warning light signals (AWLS) which alert other drivers. When the Red Lights are activated, the student may cross the roadway as directed by the driver. The bus will

make a complete stop within the regularly scheduled time; the driver will proceed to the next pick up point if no students are visibly present at the stop.

4. All Student Riders are expected to wait quietly at their designated pick up point until the school bus arrives. Designated pick up points may be moved to a location farther away from the student's home if students fail to respect their neighbor's property and vandalism is reported.
5. All Student Riders are expected to return home and contact their parent / guardian only if the school bus is over 20 minutes late. We make every attempt to be on time but unfortunately some delays occur. If you experience a repeated delay, please contact the campus office or the Transportation Department for assistance.
6. All PreK through 2nd grade students must be released to a parent, guardian, approved adult, or sibling 3rd grade or older in order for the younger student to be released from the bus. **If no adult or sibling is present at the bus stop, or if the parent or approved adults cannot be contacted, the student(s) will be returned to campus for pick up.**
7. All Student Riders are expected to sit in the assigned seat provided by the School Bus Driver and hold all-carry-on items in their lap. Depending upon the situation, we may require students to sit up to three per seat. All SISD Regular School Buses can safely transport up to three students per seat.
8. Student Riders are expected to go directly to their assigned seat and prepare for the ride. Students should sit on their back pockets and face the front at all times. Sitting sideways, extending legs out in the center aisle, sitting on back packs or band instruments or facing backwards creates a hazardous situation.
9. All Student Riders are expected to follow safety procedures while riding on any SISD School Bus. We require that students not eat or drink while on the school bus (choking hazard). Any open, non-sealable container (food, candy or drink) will be thrown in the trash when the bus is boarded AM or PM, no exceptions. **All candy, gum, food, pens, pencils and any pointed object should be left in back pack at all times (Bottled water is allowed).**

Riding Procedures for All Student Riders:

Designated Bus Stops:

1. Eligible Riders are expected to board or exit the bus at the designated stop closest to their home. Using other bus stops may result in loss of riding privileges.
2. Students should practice good citizenship while waiting for their bus to arrive and respect the property of their neighbors. Students should arrive at their stop 5 minutes prior to the bus arrival time. If crossing the street is necessary, wait until the bus arrives, controls the traffic flow with Red Lights, and driver motions to cross.
3. The same behavior expected in school should be displayed at all designated stops. Be a good neighbor.
4. **The bus drivers are not permitted to add or move stops.** If you need to discuss your bus stop location, please contact the Transportation Department for assistance.
5. Substitute Drivers are used to drive your school bus route when the regular driver is out or on a field trip. They will use the approved route description to drive the route. If the route or times are not the same as your regular driver, please contact a Transportation Director for assistance.

Boarding at a Bus stop:

1. As the school bus is approaching, students should begin forming a single line and be ready to board the bus. Stand on the side walk or 10 feet away from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
2. **No student should ever approach the bus until the bus has completely stopped** and the driver has set the air brake. The air brake system will make a loud air noise when the bus is secured.
3. The driver will open the door and motion for the students to load. Once on the bus, go directly to your assigned seat. Pushing and shoving is very dangerous and may result in injury or loss of riding privileges.
4. Any area within 10' of a school bus is considered **"The Danger Zone"**. Students within this area are in a place where they may not be seen.

Exiting at the Campus:

1. As the school bus is approaching the campus un-loading zone, all students should remain seated until the bus has completely stopped and has been secured. The campus has specific times to un-load students. Students should follow the directions of the driver.
2. When the driver signals to un-load, students should begin forming a single line and proceed to the front of the bus. Pushing and shoving may result in injury or loss of riding privileges.
3. Any articles found on the bus by the driver will be retained for the student until the afternoon run. If not claimed that afternoon, the item can be collected at the lost and found.
4. Students should never use the emergency exits unless directed by the driver. Emergency doors, windows and roof hatches are available only during evacuation procedures.

Boarding at a Campus:

1. When the students are released from the school they are expected to go directly to their bus. Students waiting for their bus to arrive should form a line along the sidewalk area of the campus-loading zone. Administrators are outside to assist if needed.
2. Students who are moving in or around the buses while they are parked are in the **"The Danger Zone"** of the bus so extra caution must be exercised. This is an unsafe procedure and is not allowed. Consequences may be assigned for students who do not follow this rule.
3. Once students board the bus, they are expected to stay on the bus and sit in their assigned seat.
4. The campus allows a specific amount of time for each bus to load. Once the driver has shut the door and the air brake is released, students are not to chase after the bus or run along the side of the bus. They are to return to the campus and make other arrangements with their administrator.

Exiting at a Bus Stop:

1. As the school bus is approaching a designated stop, students should pay attention and be ready to exit once the bus is stopped and secured.
2. **No student should ever walk down the center aisle of the bus while the bus is moving.**
3. Students are expected to exit at their designated bus stop only. Students who wish to use a different bus stop must have a signed note from their parent and Campus Administrator.
4. The driver will open the door once the bus has been secured. The amber warning lights signals (AWLS) will be activated before the bus stops. Once the bus is stopped and the door is opened, the red warning lights signals (RWLS) will be activated signaling for all traffic to stop. The driver will allow adequate time for each student to un-load. All students crossing in front of the bus should watch the driver for assistance.

5. Any area within 10' of the School Bus is considered "**The Danger Zone**". Students should immediately walk away from the school bus as they un-load. No one should ever stand, walk or cross the street directly behind a school bus (blind spot). This includes parents arriving by car at a bus stop. **NO vehicle should pull up behind or beside a bus in the danger zone.**
6. Be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading or un-loading students. Each day drivers carelessly run through the red lights flashing on school buses stopped for children. Please instruct your student to look before stepping off of the bus as well as while crossing roadways.
7. Students should never touch the school bus while they are walking away. Students should never try and retrieve any item that may end up under the school bus.
8. Cross all streets at the intersections while walking to or from the bus stop, obey all traffic signals and signs along the way.

Students riding home or to school with a friend:

1. All students that need to ride home or to school with a friend are required to have a permission note signed by the parent / guardian. The note to ride home must also be signed by a Campus Administrator/ office.
2. Students who do not have a permission note (approved by the principal or designee) will not be permitted to ride the bus home with their friend.
3. The student who requested his or her friend ride home may be permitted to stay at the campus with their friend if the Campus Administrator permits them to stay. The campus will contact their parents to pick them up.

Emergency Evacuation:

1. Stay calm and quiet; be ready to listen to instructions from the driver. Excessive noise will make it difficult for everyone to hear.
2. Follow the driver's instructions. He or she is in charge of the bus and has been trained to take actions to protect all the students.
3. All students must remain with the bus. Students cannot leave the area, even with parents, until released by the Police or Fire Department. Parents are expected to cooperate and not force themselves onto the school bus. Police / Paramedics each have important actions to complete to ensure that each student rider is safe and accounted for properly.
4. The following procedures will be used for evacuation in an emergency situation under the direction of the driver:
 - The rider nearest to the door will open the emergency door, exit, and then hold the door open.
 - The second rider nearest to the door will exit and assist the first rider in helping other students exit the bus.
 - Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
 - The third rider to exit will act as the guide and will lead the other students to a safe place. Usually 50 giant steps away from the bus.
 - Once outside the bus, follow the guide, stay together, and follow the driver's instructions as safely, quickly, and as completely as possible.
 - Buses with side doors will follow the same process starting from whichever side (back or front) is closest to the danger.
 - The driver is usually the last person off the school bus.

The driver has been trained to evacuate the bus if an emergency is present. The driver will assess the situation and make a decision to evacuate or keep the students on the bus. The safest place is where we want the students to be.

Expected Conduct on All School Buses:

Assigned Seating

1. The driver will assign each student to a seat. Each rider will be responsible for his or her space. Students should report any existing vandalism or damage immediately to the bus driver. The person determined responsible will be required to pay repair costs. Parents / Guardians will be notified by the Administration of this situation. Student riding privileges may be suspended until payment is arranged.
2. Students should always sit in their assigned seats especially when a substitute driver is on the bus.
3. Drivers may safely assign up to three students per bench seat.

Cell Phones:

1. Students will be instructed to contact their parent / guardian when the bus has been delayed (after 10-15 minutes) and they are getting home late. We strive to keep our buses on schedule; however, some delays are beyond our control. When doing so, do not allow the phone use to become a distraction to the driver.
2. Parents / Guardians are asked not to request to speak to the driver on the student's cell phone. The parents should contact the Transportation Department (979-272-8307) and make arrangements for the Transportation Department to contact them after the route.
3. Students who allow their cell phones to become a distraction or disruption on the school bus will be asked to put the phone away. Failure to do so may result in the cell phone being confiscated and turned into the campus office. Parents will then be required to pick up the cell phone at the principal's office during normal hours of operation (8am-4pm).

Electronic Devices:

1. Students who allow their MP3 players, IPODS, etc, to become a distraction or disruption on the school bus will be asked to put the item away. Failure to do so may result in the item being confiscated and turned into the campus office. Parents will then be required to pick up the item at the principal's office during normal hours of operation (8am-4pm).
2. Bus drivers are not responsible for lost or stolen items used or left on the bus.
3. All electronic devices must have headphones or be placed on mute when in use. **Excessive external noise from any device is not allowed on the school bus.** Keep the device at an acceptable volume level. If the driver requests the device to be turned down, please follow the directive. Students must be able to hear instructions from the driver at all times.
4. If the school bus is equipped with an AM/FM radio, the drivers are permitted to play only SISD approved stations. The drivers cannot change the approved list. The driver is the only one who can operate the radio on the bus and can choose to play the radio or not.
5. The use of any electronic device is a privilege. Students may lose this privilege if they fail to follow safety instructions from the driver.

Carry on Items:

1. All carry-on items must be kept in the student's lap while riding.
2. All basketballs, footballs, soccer balls, skateboards, etc, must be contained in a bag at all times. Students may be denied transportation at a Campus for failure to contain items. Items will be confiscated at a bus stop by the driver and turned over to an administrator.
3. **Snook ISD is not responsible for lost, stolen, or items broken when used or left on the bus.**

Excessive Noise:

1. All students are expected to go directly to their assigned seat and prepare for the ride home or to school.
2. **Screaming for no apparent reason, talking very loudly, singing, or dancing on the bus creating a disruptive situation will not be tolerated.**
3. Use of a noise making device is not permitted on the bus at any time.
4. All students should talk only to their seatmate or the person next to them. All conversation should be kept as quiet as possible.

Emergency Equipment:

1. School Buses are equipped with standard emergency equipment such as a fire extinguisher, reflective triangles, Blood Borne Pathogens spill kit and a minor first aid kit. Your driver has been trained for the proper use of each piece of equipment.
2. Emergency windows, doors and roof hatches are equipped to make a buzzing sound to alert the driver if students lift one of these handles. Students who sit by these windows or doors are not permitted to lift the red handles or open these exits at any time unless the driver is evacuating the bus or the students are being trained on emergency evacuation.
3. Students who tamper with these exits may lose their riding privileges. The driver will ask the students to correct the situation. If the student fails to follow the directive, the student will receive a warning from the driver and the parent / guardian will be contacted by the Administration.

Disruption of Transportation:

1. Anyone who creates a disruption of transportation services may lose their riding privileges.
2. Students are expected to follow safety procedures while riding the school bus to or from school. Each student is expected to follow their SISD Code of Conduct while riding. If it is not allowed inside the classroom, it is not allowed on the bus.
3. Drivers are not required to physically break up fights on the school bus. However, the drivers will verbally instruct the students to stop, verbally instruct the students who are not fighting or involved and keep them out of harm's way, and then notify the campus.
4. A student, who has been threatened by physical aggression or harassment, should immediately notify their Parent / Guardian, Bus Driver, Teacher or Campus Administrator.
5. School Bus Drivers may pull the bus over at a safe location to speak with students about behavior and bus safety procedures.

Items Prohibited on a school buses for safety reasons:

A student that brings any of these items onto the bus may lose their riding privileges immediately, even while an investigation is pending or coordinating for campus consequences.

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Gun or Gun-like toy | 6. Glass Containers | 11. Paint Balls |
| 2. Knife (any size) | 7. Water balloons | 12. Illegal Drugs |
| 3. Brass Knuckles | 8. Lighters | 13. Tobacco Products/Vapes |
| 4. Laser Pointers | 9. Firecracker (fireworks) | 14. Alcohol |
| 5. Stink Bombs | 10. Animals | 15. Aerosol sprays (any) |

Snook ISD School Bus Safety Warning / Referral Report

The purpose of this report is to improve Safety for all School Bus Riders. If you have any questions, please refer to the Snook ISD Bus Riders Safety Handbook located at www.snookisd.org (transportation).

The handbook is filled with information to ensure the safe transportation of your student. Please encourage your student to follow the safety guidelines. Failure to correct un-safe behavior may result in loss of riding privileges.

Steps to student consequences for rider behavior:

Step 1: Each student will be given an opportunity to correct or change their behavior. Failure to correct the behavior will result in a verbal or written warning from the driver and may generate a call from administration to initiate parent/guardian involvement.

Step 2: If similar behavior continues, the driver will report the activity by writing a bus referral. The campus administrator will determine the appropriate consequences of the bus referral and notify the parent/guardian. Continuation of bus riding privileges will be contingent upon the nature of the referral.

Step 3: If the previous consequences prove ineffective and the disruptive or unsafe behavior continues, Administration will contact the parent/guardian to determine if riding privileges will continue. The student may lose bus privileges up to 5 days.

Step 4: If the previous consequences prove ineffective and the disruptive or unsafe behavior continues, Administration will contact the parent/guardian and the student may lose bus privileges up to 10 days.

Step 5: If similar behavior continues, bus riding privileges will be revoked for the remainder of the semester. After returning to the bus in the second semester, if the student receives another bus referral, he/she will lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. The parent/guardian will be responsible for providing transportation for their student to and from school daily.

****In the event of initiation and/or participation in a major offense, a student may lose bus privileges for an undetermined length of time even if it the students first offense.**

