

## **BUS BEHAVIOR CODE**

- I. Bus drivers are in complete charge of their vehicles and have supervisory responsibilities relative to riders in their buses. Drivers must follow procedures related to documentation of disciplinary incidents. Monitors and aides will assist the driver in administering discipline.

An officer of the bus company is responsible for initiating and/or applying formal disciplinary action in accord with this policy, except for suspensions and indefinite suspensions, when a driver reports acts of misbehavior. The principal may be contacted by an officer of the bus company to assist in the process. Included in the actions that may be taken, in addition to application of the appropriate school Behavior Code, are:

- A. **Warning** issued to students via correspondence from the bus company.
- B. **Parent** conference after notification to parents of infractions via correspondence from the bus company.
- C. **Saturday detention** is given for certain offenses, after notification to parents, via at least one of the following methods: phone, a letter carried by the student, a letter hand-delivered by the bus company, or a letter sent via the US mail.
- D. **Suspension** of bus riding privileges, following consultation with the principal and after notification to parents, via correspondence from an officer of the bus company. Suspensions will not be effective until parents/guardians are notified via letter carried by the student confirmed by phone call to the parent/guardian.
- E. **Referral** of students to the Superintendent, who may take additional disciplinary action, including referral to the School Committee and/or assignment to alternate transportation.
- F. **Indefinite suspension** of bus riding privileges imposed by the School Committee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and with notice to parents of rights during School Committee proceedings.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

- I. Notification to parent/guardian of a disciplinary action will take place no later than two school days following the offense. Any appeal of a disciplinary action by a student (if 18 or older) or parent/guardian must be made within forty-eight (48) hours of the receipt of a conduct report and in accord with the District's Appeals Policy.
- II. If, in the driver's opinion, student actions are detrimental to the safety of the trip, a driver may bring a bus back to the garage or stop the bus and radio the garage for directions. If a student is required to leave the bus under such circumstances, parents will be called to pick up the student at the bus terminal. If a parent is not available, police will be called. The appropriate provision under paragraphs IV or V will be administered.
- III. The following guidelines will insure appropriate behavior, efficiency of bus runs and safety for students. Students are required to follow the procedures and rules noted.
  - A. Leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes in advance of the scheduled pickup time.
  - B. Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
  - C. Enter and leave the bus only when the door is fully open and never when the bus is in motion. Approach the bus only when it has come to a complete stop.
  - D. Do not push or shove on entering or leaving the bus.  
Take assigned seat promptly on entering the bus and remain in it until arrival at destination. No one is permitted to "save" seats and students must sit only in his/her assigned seat. The driver will assign seats at the start of the school year.
  - E. The purpose of assigning seats is to insure sound control practices including student-inflicted damage to the bus. Parents of students damaging school buses will be responsible

for restitution. Bus riding privileges may be suspended if restitution is not made. The driver may reassign seats as necessary.

- F. Leave the bus promptly and in an orderly manner. Students should move away from the bus after being discharged. Do not linger near the bus or try to hang on to the bus.
- G. Do not cross the highway until given consent by the bus driver and be sure to cross the highway at least ten feet in front of the bus, never behind it.
- H. Conduct on the bus is that which is acceptable while in school. The bus driver is in charge of the bus and responsible for students. Students must obey the driver promptly and cooperatively in order to insure the safety of all riders.
- I. Be respectful to the bus driver. Drivers have an important job to do and need student cooperation.
- J. Students should not project hands, arms or other parts of the body from bus windows or doors.
- K. Students should not throw anything out of bus windows.
- L. Eating or drinking on the bus is prohibited.
- M. Lunch boxes, books and athletic equipment, etc., should be kept out of the aisle.
- N. No pupil will light matches, possess/use/distribute alcohol or drugs, including marijuana and marijuana derivatives (i.e. edibles as well as synthetic substances), tobacco and tobacco-related products\* and other controlled substances. Items will be seized and destroyed, unless said items are required as part of a police investigation. Items will not be returned.
- O. Articles that could cause injury to other students, such as sticks, breakable containers, firearms, skateboards, etc., are not permitted on buses. Other items not allowed are golf clubs/bags, oversized sports duffels, and large instruments such as French horns and tenor and baritone saxophones.
- P. Animals, except for service animals, are not permitted on buses.
- Q. Fighting, use of vulgar, crude or offensive language and loud, boisterous talk or other disruptive noises or actions that might distract the driver are prohibited.
- R. Students should assist in keeping the bus clean by not leaving waste paper or other items on the floor.
- S. In the event of an emergency, written permission of parent and school authorities and a phone call from the parent to the bus company are required for a student to ride on a bus other than the one assigned.
- T. At dismissal, students will not be allowed to enter a bus once the doors have been closed and the buses begin to exit school property unless accompanied by a teacher. The third occurrence of tardiness will result in a disciplinary referral.
- U. Cell phones may be used for emergency purposes only.

#### **IV. The following offenses will generate the disciplinary actions indicated:**

##### **CLASS I**

1. Riding an unassigned bus without prior approval
2. Bringing animals and/or pets on the bus
3. Chewing gum, eating (including candy) or drinking on the bus
4. Distributing gum, candy, etc. to other students on the bus
5. Littering
6. Not sitting in assigned seat
7. Not sitting in seat properly
8. Volume on headphones distracting to driver
9. Bringing prohibited items, such as those listed in III P O above (but not including firearms) on the bus.
10. Late arrival to the bus at dismissal time.

##### **Discipline**

**First offense** - warning

**Second offense** - warning and conference with parent. If parent does not respond within 3 school days, the student will serve Saturday detention.

**Third and subsequent offenses** - Saturday detention

NOTE: At the elementary level, Saturday detention will be replaced by lunch or recess detention.

## **CLASS II**

1. Getting on/off at a stop other than the student's assigned stop (without prior approval)
2. Crossing behind the bus or refusing to wait for the driver's instruction to cross
3. Failure to follow directions from a driver or monitor
4. Obstructing safe passage down the aisle
5. Refusing to identify oneself to the driver when asked
6. Extending head, hands or feet out of bus window
7. Propelling or throwing any object inside the bus, or out the window, or at the bus.
8. Spraying perfumes, deodorants, etc. on the bus
9. Wrestling and/or horseplay
10. Creating disruptive noise levels
11. Acting disrespectful to the driver, aide, or monitor, or another student
12. Moving out of assigned seat while the bus is in motion, which includes climbing over or under bus seats at any time during the route
13. Stealing
14. Using obscenities (language, gestures) or sexual comments.
15. Vandalism to the bus
16. Students obtaining late bus passes after leaving campus or presenting forged or stolen passes
17. Overt display of affection (kissing, fondling, etc.)
18. Destruction of property belonging to another person

## **Discipline**

**First offense** - Saturday detention

**Second offense** - 2-day suspension from school bus transportation

**Third and subsequent offenses** - 5-day suspension from school bus transportation; referral to the Superintendent.

NOTE: At the elementary level, Saturday detention will be replaced by lunch or recess detention.

## **CLASS III**

1. Fighting on the school bus (If the fighting occurs while a bus is on school grounds, school staff will be called and the student will be subject to the school behavior code.)
2. Possession of unsafe items, including, but not limited to, matches, lighters, bullets
3. Possession of tobacco and tobacco-related products\*
4. Verbal assault directed at the school bus driver, aide, or monitor
5. Sexual harassment (see Chariho policy for definitions), including exposure
6. Behavior that jeopardizes the safe operation of the bus
7. Boarding a bus during suspension from bus-riding privileges
8. Spitting
9. Bullying (see Chariho policy for definitions)
10. Making racial slurs
11. Hitting, pushing, tripping, biting, pinching, or pulling hair of another student
12. Verbal or non-verbal threat to do bodily harm

**Discipline**

Minimum five (5) day suspension from school bus transportation; application of school discipline in accord with the appropriate Behavior Code; referral to the Superintendent.

**CLASS IV**

1. Opening or exiting through any emergency exit of the school bus (i.e., rear door, side door, emergency windows)
2. Substance abuse on the school bus (use and/or distribution of tobacco and tobacco-related products\*, possession, use, and/or distribution of alcohol, drugs, and other controlled substances)
3. Physical assault of another student on the school bus
4. A second Class III infraction in the same school year

**Discipline**

Minimum five (5) day suspension from school bus transportation; application of school discipline in accord with the appropriate Behavior Code; referral to the Superintendent.

**CLASS V**

1. Possession or use of a weapon, including replicas, on the school bus
2. Physical assault on the school bus driver or monitor
3. A second Class IV infraction in the same school year

**Discipline**

Minimum ten (10) day suspension from school bus transportation; application of school discipline in accord with the appropriate Behavior Code; referral to Superintendent and/or School Committee for additional discipline, which may include an alternate placement.

**V. General Information**

All infractions of Classes II-V will be reported by the transportation company to the Superintendent of Schools and Classes IV and V will be reported to the appropriate police department.

Failure to serve a Saturday detention without a medical excuse will result in an assignment of three Extended School Days. If a student is ill, parent must notify the detention supervisor by telephone during the time when the Saturday detention is scheduled to be served.

Restitution will be required for intentional damage to buses.

All students attending Chariho schools and riding Chariho buses are subject to this policy.

- VI.** The Bus Behavior Code will be provided to each parent at the beginning of each school year. If revisions are made during the school year, a revised edition shall immediately be distributed to each parent, by the school district, which will indicate the effective date of the change(s).

\*"Tobacco Product(s)" means any product containing and made, or derived from, tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, pipe tobacco, spitting tobacco, chewing tobacco, dipping tobacco, powdered tobacco, loose tobacco, snus, pouches, pellets, nicotine toothpicks, nicotine orbs, nicotine gel or lotion, or electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes, or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization, or bidi cigarettes which can be used for, but whose use is not limited to, smoking, sniffing, chewing, vaporizing, inhaling, absorbing, dissolving, or spitting and ingestion by any other means of the product. "Tobacco Product(s)" does not include any product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for sale as a tobacco cessation product and is being marketed and sold solely for the approved purpose.

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