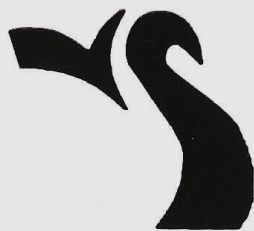


STUDENT HANDBOOK



The Swan Valley School Division



TO ALL PARENTS:

In an ongoing effort to ensure the safety of your child, we would appreciate if you would take a few moments to go over this guideline.

The Swan Valley School Division is committed to ensuring safe bus ridership and supports drivers in their efforts, by sponsoring training programs in bus driver preparation and annual bus driver safety. School bus drivers have an important and difficult job. They are responsible for driving your child to and from school every-day. Every effort is made to see that school bus vehicles are in a safe mechanical condition and equipped with reflective markings and safety devices. In spite of this training and maintenance, collective passenger behavior remains a potential hazard to the safety of your child. Parents who have travelled with children can appreciate the distraction of thirty to fifty children, each very eager to be seen and heard. Our success in providing a safe transportation system, for your child, depends largely upon your assistance and cooperation in urging your child to know and obey all bus riding regulations and procedures. Safe ridership through effective discipline on the school bus is very important. A video surveillance camera has been made available on buses to support drivers and parents in attaining this goal.

We would appreciate your help in ensuring that your child knows the safety rules contained in this brochure. More importantly, we ask for your assistance in stressing to your child the importance of following the rules and practicing good behavior.

Your child's safety is our priority. Your help in educating your child is greatly appreciated.

RIDER ELIGIBILITY:

Any student who is not a bus student or any bus student wishing to use bus service other than his/her regularly scheduled service must present to the driver a letter of authorization signed by a parent, guardian or the principal. The authorization, presented before boarding a bus, must include details of destination. This authorization may also be obtained through a parent request to the Transportation Office at 204-734-3415. Under no circumstances will students be dropped off at a point other than their designated drop-off point.

Parents are asked to help by observing the following:

- Inform your bus driver, if possible, when your child will be absent.
- Help your child to be punctual at all times.
- Encourage your child to obey the bus driver cheerfully at all times. Lives depend on it.

Please help us to make your child understand that riding a school bus is not a right but a privilege. It is therefore mandatory that should a child persistently misbehave they will be suspended from riding on the bus.

RULES FOR SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS

Before You Leave the House:

- Get up on time. Leave home in time to catch the bus. Be at your bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pickup time. **The bus will not wait for you as there are other students standing at their pickup points waiting.** Buses wait five minutes only after dismissal time.
- Dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions.
- Remember to gather everything you will need to take with you for the day (books, lunch, etc.).

Walking to the Bus Stop:

- Choose the safest route to walk to and from the bus stop. Stay on sidewalks or the shoulder of the road (facing traffic). If you must walk on the shoulder of the road, walk in single file. Use crosswalks and traffic lights. NEVER cross between parked cars.
- Try to walk with friends and neighbors so you won't be alone. Do not talk to strangers or accept candy, food or rides.
- When you arrive at the bus stop stand well off the road while waiting for the bus. Do not disrespect property around the bus stop (no littering, throwing stones or snowballs, etc.).

Boarding the Bus:

- When the bus arrives, please wait till the bus is stopped before proceeding. Wait for a hand signal from the driver. Cross the street when the red lights are flashing at the top of the bus and the stop-arm is extended. Cross three meters in front of the bus. If danger approaches the driver shall sound the horn.
- Board the bus in single file without crowding or pushing. Use the handrail to prevent slipping or falling.

- Promptly take your seat and remain in that seat unless permitted to move by the driver. Your driver has the option of assigning seats.
- Put large items, such as gym bags, under the seat. Keep the aisle clear to allow others to pass while getting on or off the bus.

Riding on the Bus:

- Students are under the authority of the bus driver. All instructions given by the driver are to be obeyed. Do not disrespect your bus driver.
- Do not bully or tease other students.
- Remain seated with feet on the floor and the aisle clear. Do not stand up or move around when the bus is moving.
- When a driver comes upon a railroad crossing please be very quiet. The driver needs to be able to hear if there is an oncoming train.
- Windows are to be opened only with permission from your driver. No objects are to be thrown out of the window. Arms, legs or other body parts must not extend outside the bus.
- Do not touch the emergency exits or any other emergency equipment.
- Skates, hockey sticks and curling brooms are permitted only if they do not present a hazard to other passengers. Skates must have skate guards. These items are not to be in the bus aisle.
- Do not become involved in any kind of unruly behavior. Loud talking and/or yelling can be distracting to your driver and thus become a safety factor. Personal music devices are allowed only with the driver's permission.
- Use of profane and obscene language will not be tolerated.
- Eating or drinking on the school bus is permitted **ONLY** with your driver's permission. Eating of sunflower seeds is not permitted.
- Help to keep your bus clean. Do not deposit garbage on the floor.
- Use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol and lighting of matches, etc., is not allowed.
- Vandalism to the bus will not be tolerated. (Damage to seats, breaking windows, etc.). Students will be held financially responsible.

- Bringing dangerous objects on the bus is not allowed. These objects include knives, firearms and anything which could present a danger to the other passengers.
- Fighting on the bus will not be tolerated.
- Obey all posted regulations; your safety and well-being depend on it.

PROCEDURES FOR MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE ON THE BUS:

A school bus is an extension of the classroom; therefore, bus drivers play an important role in maintaining an atmosphere which harmonizes with classroom learning. In addition, since discipline on the school bus is related to safety, we are committed to supporting your efforts in maintaining a safe and orderly atmosphere for students while on the school bus.

Students have the right to know what is expected of them and we are asking the drivers to remind them of the rules from time to time.

We are asking our drivers to express their expectations with a positive and friendly approach to the students.

The key to effective discipline is consistency. We ask our drivers to maintain and follow a set procedure if disciplinary action becomes necessary. The procedures to be followed are indicated below:

Minor Infractions:

- The driver will speak to the student at the home stop or the school asking that this behavior doesn't happen again and reminding the student that a repeat occurrence will be reported to the principal.
- A second violation brings a second warning and a report to the principal.
- A third violation results in the student receiving a "Think Paper" which automatically involves parents. A "Think Paper" will and must be returned to the driver the next day with signatures of parent and student, including an agreement to correct the behavior.

Major Infractions:

- The driver stops the bus immediately and after stating the problem follows the third step for minor infractions.
- If the behavior reoccurs, once again the bus driver stops the bus immediately and informs the student of the problem. This time the Transportation Supervisor is included with a recommendation for suspension. This recommendation will automatically involve parents, principal and Transportation Supervisor.

Exiting or Leaving the Bus:

- Stay seated till the bus has stopped and the door is opened.
- Say “Good-bye” or “Thanks” to the bus driver. This shows courtesy.
- Use the handrail to prevent falling or slipping. Take one step at a time.
- Move away from the bus. Do not stop to talk or pick something up. Keep away from the wheels of the bus. Look for a signal from the driver before crossing in front of the bus (3 meters).
- The area immediately around the bus is the “DANGER ZONE”. This is where the majority of students are injured (usually by the bus itself). If you have to cross the street, please observe these points.

INJURIES OR ACCIDENTS:

If a student receives an injury on the bus whether it be getting on the bus, riding the bus or disembarking from the bus, parents will be notified. First Aid will be applied. If the injury is very serious the student will be taken to a doctor for diagnosis or treatment.

If a school bus is involved in an accident, all the students may be sent to the hospital for observation to obtain proper diagnosis and treatment. Again, parents will be notified.

TO ALL STUDENTS:

All students who ride on a school bus, including any students who ride only on extra-curricular trips or occasionally for any reason must take evacuation training. Emergency Evacuation Drills are completed in the spring and fall by the drivers and the school administration. Teachers review school bus safety information with their students, which may come in the form of films, contests, projects or other activities, all reinforcing safety rules.

This training would be of great help should an emergency situation happen.

IN AN EMERGENCY – STAY CALM!! Should your driver be injured and the bus still moving, an older student should turn off the ignition and apply the park brake. When your bus is stopped, students should leave the bus in an orderly manner through either exit door, look out for each other and see that everyone exits safely. Stay together away from the bus and off the roadway, while two older students go to the nearest telephone for help. Unless other danger is evident, do not move an injured person. Telephone your school bus garage at this telephone number 204-734-3415.

EMERGENCY EXITING OF A BUS:

During emergencies such as collisions, fires, stalled vehicles, weather conditions, etc., it is very important that students follow these guidelines:

- Stay calm and quiet.
- Note where all exits are located.
- Listen to direction from the bus driver or other officials at the time.
- Use the front or rear door exits; whichever exit is the closest or most convenient at the time. Wait your turn. **DO NOT PUSH OR SHOVE.** Proceed to the exit as quickly as possible while trying to maintain order.
- Older students shall assist younger children.
- Move away from the bus and stay away. Stay in a group.
- If someone is injured, for any reason, do not move that person unless it is necessary. Any unnecessary movement could further disturb an injury causing extensive damage (e.g., neck injury, spinal injury).

Bus Drivers:

Swan Valley School Division bus drivers are trained and meet all requirements for operating a school bus. Our drivers are trained to use defensive driving techniques to avoid, or lessen, the severity of accidents. They are also trained in emergency procedures. By maintaining control, the bus driver helps create a safer environment for students on the bus.

The drivers inspect their buses every day. Any problems are reported to the bus mechanics and recorded in the school bus log book.

The bus drivers must maintain the route schedule, although sometimes weather, breakdowns or traffic situations interfere. **They only stop at designated school bus stops.** Drivers are responsible for reporting all stop-arm violations. (Vehicles that pass the bus while students are being loaded or unloaded when the stop sign is extended and the red warning lights are flashing).

Mechanics:

Mechanics do preventative and scheduled maintenance to ensure the school bus fleet is in safe condition at all times.

Twice each year all school buses receive complete Motor Vehicle Safety Inspections. Random yearly inspections are also done by Vehicle Standards and Pupil Transportation.

Motorists:

In school bus related accidents, the majority of students are not injured while riding the bus. Many students are struck by motorists who fail to stop for the flashing red lights and the extended stop-arm.

Flashing amber lights are a warning that the bus is prepared to stop. Flashing red lights and the extended stop-arm mean that the bus is stopped to either load or unload students. Drivers must stop at least five meters (17 feet) from the bus when they see these signals. Only on divided roadways is opposing traffic not required to stop. However, traffic behind the bus must stop.

Each year many stop-arm violations are reported to the police by our bus drivers. Every incident represents an unsafe act, which could cause substantial injury, or even death, to a student.

By following the guidelines outlined, the Swan Valley School Division, which includes students, parents, drivers and administration should ensure the safe transportation of our students.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION – DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Board of Trustees would like to preserve its record of no serious incidents as a result of winter storms and has a policy which it hopes will serve as a precaution to ensure the safety of every student being transported by bus.

In order that parents may understand this policy and procedure, a brief outline is given below:

- In the case of a bad storm, in the morning, before buses are scheduled to start their morning route, bus drivers in key areas have been instructed to notify the Transportation Supervisor of storm conditions. The Transportation Supervisor and the Superintendent will assess the situation and decide whether any or all buses will be cancelled. In the case of a single cancellation, the driver will be asked to notify the students along his route. If there are many cancellations, notification will be given by radio over CJ 104.5 FM - Swan River, 95.3 Fox FM – Yorkton, CKDM 730 AM –Dauphin and on the SVSD Website. On a stormy morning parents are asked to listen to these stations for any announcements which may be forthcoming.
- Should a storm develop during the day between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., the School Division is very reluctant to allow the buses to leave early. There is a distinct possibility that a student may arrive home before the usual hour, find no one at home and perhaps the house locked.
- There is a billet system in place in all schools if bus routes cannot be completed. Make sure you have a billet named for your child. (see your school)

Only in extreme cases is a decision made to have buses leave early. Even so, it is difficult to gain much time for the following reasons:

1. Most buses leave at the same time because of an interlocking system.
2. Drivers often cannot be reached to notify them of an early dismissal time. Therefore, failure to reach one driver may affect many other buses.

3. Every precaution must be taken that parents are telephoned where small children are concerned. This takes a lot of time. Parents often cannot be reached.
4. Students are often at a school other than their own. They must be returned to their home school in order to catch their own bus.
5. In case of early dismissal, notification will be broadcasted on local radio stations.
6. All of these reasons are time consuming. An added problem is that telephone lines become busy so that contact is often impossible to make.

Parents may be assured that every precaution is being taken during a storm. Driver Captains will notify the Transportation Supervisor if conditions are bad enough to warrant some consideration of bus schedule change. The Administration Staff is always conscious of a storm and endeavors to make a proper decision.

In order to preclude any undue discomfort in case of an emergency, a student in adverse weather during the winter months must be adequately dressed before boarding a bus. The School Division reserves the right to have bus drivers refuse to transport any student, if in their opinion, the student is inadequately dressed for the conditions prevailing.

We try to dispatch buses keeping the safety of your child uppermost in our consideration. We solicit your cooperation.

Transportation Department
The Swan Valley School Division