

Student and Parent Transportation Handbook

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RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; TRANSPORTATION

Welcome:

Welcome to the Wa-Nee Transportation Department. You have chosen the safest, most efficient, and most environmentally friendly way to transport your student to and from school. At Wa-Nee we strive to provide safe and efficient school bus service that will enhance your student's educational day.

Keeping everyone efficient and safe requires rules and procedures to be in place. Three rules sum up this entire manual, BE KIND, BE ON TIME, AND BE SAFE!

For details regarding school transportation, please familiarize yourself with this handbook and feel free to contact the transportation office if you have any questions.

It is important to remember that school bus transportation is a bus service, not a taxi service. Bus stops are designed for safety and efficiency. Safety walking to and from the bus stop and while waiting at the bus stop is a parent and student responsibility.

Students are expected to be at designated pick-up points ten (10) minutes prior to the published stop time. **Bus times may vary.** Allow ten (10) minutes after the published bus stop time before leaving the designated pick-up point and/or calling the transportation office.

Please visit the transportation web site, contact your bus driver, or contact the transportation office if you have specific questions regarding school bus transportation.

You may also visit <http://www.wanee.org/transportation.aspx> for more information regarding school bus transportation.

Have a safe school year,

Amy Rosa
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RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; TRANSPORTATION

General Rules:

- School bus riding to and from school, extracurricular trips, and field trips is a privilege, not a right.
- School bus transportation is not required by the State of Indiana and therefore the services provided are an option chosen by Wa-Nee Community Schools and subject to change.
- All bus riders are expected to demonstrate the same standards of conduct and citizenship as required on the school campus.
- All bus safety rules and policies must be demonstrated to maintain bus riding privileges for field trips, extracurricular trips and bus routes.
- Drivers have the authority to direct the student in any reasonable manner to maintain order and safety.

General Student Responsibilities:

- Respect others.
- Obey the bus driver.
- Be responsible for your own safety and the safety of others.

Parent Responsibilities (may include but are not limited to):

- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure school attendance. If school bus riding privileges have been revoked it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the student is transported by other means.
- Know and understand transportation scheduling requirements. (see scheduling)
- No one is allowed on school buses except those who are invited. Uninvited persons who enter a bus may be guilty of criminal trespassing laws and therefore, may be punished by law. Do not board a school bus for any reason unless invited to do so by the driver.
- For safety reasons, do not approach the bus doors to talk to the driver. Either speak to the driver through the driver window or wait to communicate by phone or email later. For safety reasons, drivers are directed to shut the door if an adult approaches the bus and if he/she feels safety may be in question.
- Read and understand the infractions and consequences policy as well as all transportation rules. Discuss all transportation rules with your child(ren).
- Support the bus driver by teaching children to respect and obey those in authority.
- Support discipline decisions by the school principal.
- Teach your children respect for others.
- Supervise travel to and from school bus stops. Parents are responsible for their child's safety while going to or from the bus stop and while waiting on the school bus.
- Supervision at bus stops is a parent responsibility.
- Wa-Nee Community Schools will not take responsibility for or enter disputes involving parents and/or students concerning matters that take place prior to the student boarding the school bus or after the student has disembarked from the bus on his/her way home.
- Bus stop conflict should be handled by the parents and, if necessary, local law enforcement.
- Ensure children are out and waiting for the bus at least 10 minutes prior to their published stop time. Understand that bus drivers cannot hold traffic or delay routes while waiting on students.
- Allow 10 minutes from the published stop time before leaving the stop and calling the school or the transportation office. Various factors may cause a delay in bus routes.
- Ensure children are properly dressed for dark mornings, cold weather and/or emergencies. Provide reflective clothing.

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- Ensure all student belongings are securely placed in a zipped bag.
- Do not send large items on the bus. I.e. school projects, large band instruments, and unsecured food products.
- Do not enter school bus parking lots. Use the school's designated area for picking-up and dropping-off.
- Parents will be held responsible for damage caused by their child to school property.
- In the rare event a parent must ride the bus for a trip, all adults must first obtain permission from the school and complete a background check. The adult must then wear a chaperone badge. Drivers have the right to refuse a ride to anyone.

Eligibility:

- Bus transportation may be provided for students who live within the Wa-Nee School District.
- Students living out-of-district or out of their residential boundary school must comply with out-of-district tuition transfer policies.
- No busing zones exist. Please contact the transportation office for non-eligible areas or visit <http://www.wanee.org/transportation.aspx>
- Failure to follow all safety rules or behavior expectations may result in the loss of riding eligibility to and from school, all extracurricular trips, and field trips.

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Scheduling:

- Schedule all permanent transportation plans using a transportation request form.
<http://www.wancee.org/TransportationRequestForms.aspx>
- All transportation plans must be scheduled and documented with the transportation department.
- Students will not be permitted to ride unassigned buses for any reason other than emergency.
- Students will ride only their assigned school bus and will board and depart from the bus at assigned bus stops.
- High school students must re-register for transportation every summer prior to the next school year. High school students who do not register are not permitted to ride a bus.
- Elementary and middle school student transportation plans will be based on their previous year plan unless a change is submitted to the transportation office by July 15th prior to each school year.

Schedule your bus plans according to the following guidelines:

Consistent, One Location Schedule*

AM Plan:

Choose **one** morning location. Home or an alternative site.

Same location every morning; Monday through Friday, all school year.

PM Plan:

Choose **one** afternoon location. Home or an alternative site.

Same location every afternoon; Monday through Friday, all school year.

*Custody situations must choose one, neutral location for consistent morning and afternoon transportation.

*An alternative site is any site other than the home address within the school and/or district boundary.

Changes:

- Only changes to permanent transportation plans are accepted.
- Requests for a permanent change in transportation will become effective only after approval and adequate time has been given to properly notify all persons concerned.
- Same day/last minute transportation changes are not accepted. The parent/guardian must decide to meet or arrange for someone else to meet the child at his/her regular scheduled bus stop.
- Telephone requests to the school office or transportation office will not be accepted.
- Handwritten notes to the school office, teacher, or bus driver are not accepted.
- Changes to transportation plans might not be approved. Bus capacity may not be available for additional riders.

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Picking-up your child from school:

- If, at any time, a parent wishes to pick-up their student rather than having them ride the bus, arrangements can be made with the school office **no later than noon**. Otherwise, the parent must make plans to pick-up the student from the regularly assigned bus stop. The office reserves the right to ensure the caller has the authority to make changes and pick-up the student.

Temporary or One-time Schedule Changes:

- A temporary change in a student's regular assigned bus stop is discouraged.
- Transportation to friends' homes for events, parties, and other group activities will not be available by school bus.
- Exceptions to transportation policies may be made in emergency situations. Changes must be approved by the school Principal and Transportation department.

No Show Policy:

- It is important to communicate with your school when there is a change of address, extended absence from school, or a new pick up/drop off request.
- After three days of not boarding the bus at the approved stop, the driver will assume you have moved or no longer need bus transportation. Transportation will be placed on hold at that time until the transportation office has been contacted to reinstate the bus stop.

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Bus Stop Rules:

Choosing the school bus as an option to get your child to and from school is a very safe choice. School buses are the safest form of transportation in the US. See more at www.nhtsa.gov. Getting to and from the school bus requires safe procedures.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure safety to and from the school bus doors. There is a transfer of responsibility at the bus doors between the parents and the school.

Bus stop safety rests on the parents and the students. Therefore, at Wa-Nee, we have expectations that parents will help supervise students, ensure safety at school bus stops, and ensure proper loading and unloading procedures. (See Parent Responsibilities.)

There are times when students will be required to cross the roadway to get to or from the bus. Safety protocol must be followed. School buses are designed to stop traffic with the use of yellow warning lights, red warning lights, and stop signs.

Getting Ready for School

- ✓ Have your children put everything they carry in a backpack or school bag so that they won't drop things along the way.
- ✓ Have them wear bright contrasting colors so they will be more easily seen by drivers. Reflective material is the best.
- ✓ Make sure they leave home on time to walk to the bus stop and arrive before the bus is due. Running to or after the bus is dangerous.
- ✓ Make sure there are no loose drawstrings or other objects that may be caught in the door or become a tripping hazard.

Walking to the Bus Stop

- ✓ Walk your young child to the bus stop and have older children walk in groups. There is safety in numbers; groups are easier for drivers to see.
- ✓ Practice good pedestrian behavior: walk on the sidewalk.
- ✓ If you must walk in the street, walk single file, face traffic and stay as close to the edge of the road as you can.
- ✓ Stop and look left, right, and then left again if you must cross the street. Do the same thing at driveways and alleys. Exaggerate your head turns and narrate your actions so your child knows you are looking left, right, and left.

Waiting at the Bus Stop

- ✓ Be out and waiting at the bus stop at least 10 minutes before the schedule bus stop time. Wait 10 minutes past the published stop time before leaving the stop or calling the school office.
- ✓ Students wait at bus stops for buses. The buses do not wait at stops for students.
- ✓ Do not let your child play games or push and shove at the bus stop. This is dangerous behavior near traffic.
- ✓ Make sure your child stands at least 10 feet (5 giant steps) from the road while waiting for the bus. Have younger children practice taking 5 giant steps to become familiar with 10 feet.

Getting On the Bus

- ✓ Stay out of the Danger Zone. Never cross behind the bus or come to the bus doors from alongside the bus.
- ✓ Board the bus at your assigned bus stop. Drivers count students and have expectations of how many should be getting on at each stop.
- ✓ Remain 10 feet from the roadway and do not move toward the bus until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- ✓ Before moving toward the bus, wait for the driver's signal and check for hazards before moving forward.
- ✓ Always be responsible for your own safety and continuously look for hazards. Look left, right and, left again.
- ✓ Be prepared to respond to the driver's instructions.
- ✓ Use the handrail when boarding. Go immediately to your seat and be seated.
- ✓ Tell the driver if you are aware of any other student who may be running late.

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- ✓ Warn children that if they drop something, they should never pick it up. Instead, they should tell the driver and follow the driver's instructions.

Getting Off the Bus

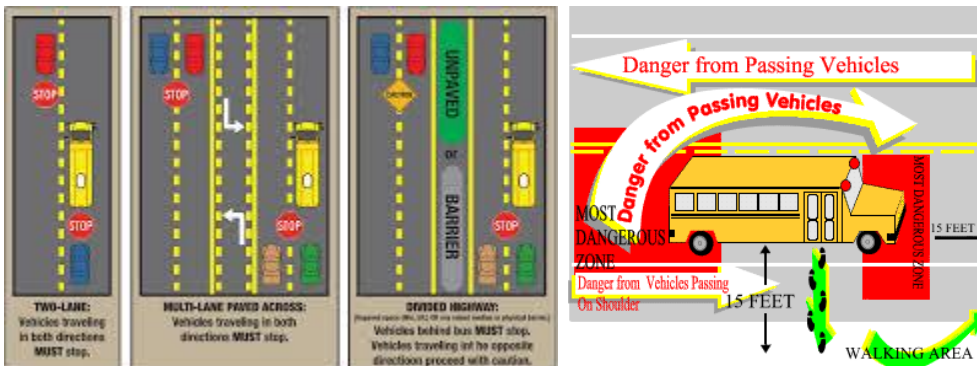
- ✓ Children must get off the bus at their assigned stop.
- ✓ Teach your children to secure loose drawstrings and other objects that may get caught in the handrail or door of the bus as they are exiting and to place all items in a bag.
- ✓ Remind children to look to the right before they step off the bus. Drivers in a hurry sometimes try to sneak by buses on the right.
- ✓ Non-crossing students should get off the bus as a group first.
- ✓ Crossing students must wait 15 feet in front of the bus and wait for the driver's signal to cross.
- ✓ Once crossing students reach the center of the road, they should pause and look both ways for traffic before continuing.
- ✓ When you meet your child at the bus stop after school, wait on the side where the child will be dropped off, not across the street. Children can be so excited at seeing you after school that they dash across the street and forget the safety rules. Cross with children using the same rules as above.
- ✓ Do not allow children to go alongside the bus, behind the bus, or pause to get the mail. They must move out of the danger zone immediately.

Riding the Bus

- ✓ Children should talk quietly, keep their hands and feet to themselves, and be courteous to others.
- ✓ Children should stay seated during the entire bus ride and keep the aisles clear.
- ✓ The bus driver is in charge. Be courteous to the driver and follow the driver's instructions.
- ✓ Children should be prepared for emergencies and ready to follow driver or safety helper's instructions.
- ✓ Children should never distract the driver from driving and especially when other students are boarding or leaving the school bus.

Know the Motorist Laws

- ✓ Treat school bus lights like a stop light. Yellow = prepare to stop. Red = stop.
- ✓ Yellow flashing lights on the top of the bus mean the bus is preparing to stop for children.
- ✓ A school bus must be completely stopped before the driver can turn on the red lights and deploy the stop arm.
- ✓ Passing a school bus with the stop sign out and the red lights flashing is against the law and will be punished with fines, tickets, and license points that lead to suspension and increased insurance rates.
- ✓ Wa-Nee has buses with stop arm cameras and we will move toward full punishment of any violation.



Report any Violators

- ✓ If you witness a stop arm violation and have video proof, report the following information to local authorities. Report a complete plate number, make and model of the vehicle, driver description, direction of the violator, and direction of the bus.

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Riding Rules:

- The driver may assign seating for all or some of the students on the bus. Drivers decide the seating arrangement. Parents do not dictate where students sit on the bus.
- Riders are to follow all rules and be courteous to drivers and others.
- Remain seated, facing forward while the bus is in motion.
- Remain seated until the bus has stopped.
- While the bus is in motion, never cross the line into the driver area.
- Remain quiet. Noise on the bus shall be kept to a minimum with students speaking in reasonable conversation voices.
- Become silent at all railroad crossings, school bus stops and other danger zones as designated by the bus driver.
- No window will be lowered past the half-way point.
- Do not put anything or any body part out of the window.
- Do not tamper with any of the bus equipment.
- Always keep all objects out of the aisle.
- Understand the driver is concentrating on the roadway and traffic. Do not distract the driver.
- Do not distract the driver during a student stop. Understand that the driver must concentrate on students outside of the bus.
- Report problems to the bus driver when the bus is parked in a safe location, contact the driver later, or call the transportation office.
- Remove all trash. Do not litter.

Video Surveillance:

- The use of video recording devices may be installed and used to assist the driver in providing for the safety and well-being of the students while on the bus.
- Video and audio surveillance data is the property of Wa-Nee Community Schools and not available for viewing by parents, students, or community members.
- Video and audio surveillance data may be used during the discipline process.

Property Damage:

- School buses are considered school property and therefore government property.
- Riders who cause damage to school property will be responsible for repair costs and may experience school discipline action, school suspension or expulsion, loss of riding privileges, and/or legal action.

Personal Belongings:

- The following cargo is forbidden to be transported on a school bus: pets, alcohol, drugs, ammunition, explosives, firearms, knives, tobacco, nicotine-containing products, or any other dangerous or objectionable materials or objects.
- Large and/or loose items are not permitted on the bus. All items must fit in a bag or case. All items must fit on the student's lap or between their feet on the floor.

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- Use of technology is permitted if it does not cause a distraction to the driver or others. Drivers will revert to the school technology guidelines if students abuse the use of technology devices.
- Students are prohibited from videoing or taking pictures while on the bus.
- All belongings must be placed in a zipped bag while boarding and unloading the bus. Loose items are a safety hazard.
- Personal music devices may not be played on the bus unless earphones are used.
- Earphones may only be used on the bus. They may not be used during the load and unload process.
- Both the use of the bus radio and the station or programs which students listen to must be approved by the bus driver.
- Bus drivers may confiscate any object that has been deemed questionable and submit the item to the principal.
- Shoes must be tied, and bag and clothing strings must be tucked away.
- Items left on a bus may be retrieved by the student from the bus driver during the next trip on that vehicle. Items may also be placed in the school lost and found.
- Label all student belongings to make the recovery of a lost item easier.
- The school corporation is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal belongings.

Medication:

- For safety reasons, avoid transporting medication on the bus.
- All medication that must be transported must always be in the original container and secured in the student's bag while on the bus.
- A note from the parent must accompany any medication.
- No medication may be used or taken while riding the bus.
- In the event of an emergency need to use or take medication during the bus ride, the student must notify the bus driver and the driver will notify the school nurse.
- Parents must inform the transportation office, in writing, of lifesaving emergency medication needs and provide instructions on how and when to allow or administer the medication.

Food and Beverages:

- No hard candy can be eaten on the school bus.
- Only water is allowed on the school bus. All bottles must be spill proof.
- Individual drivers may allow riders with long rides to have certain foods.
- All riders are responsible to remove all trash. Food privileges may be revoked.
- Individual drivers may allow riders to chew gum unless gum is found on floors, walls, seats, etc.

Discipline Process:

- The school bus driver is in charge. Students must follow bus and safety rules to maintain bus riding privileges.
- Drivers will work with students to ensure safe and courteous behavior.
- Drivers will document concerns on a verbal warning log.

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- If a student's behavior warrants a bus referral form (see Infractions/Consequences form). The driver will submit the form to the school principal. The principal will decide the discipline outcome.
- If removed from riding the bus, the student may not ride any Wa-Nee bus during the time of the bus suspension. This includes all extracurricular and field trips. Students who cannot ride the bus to events cannot participate in events, including sporting events.
- When asked to address a behavior problem, parents should remember that school personnel have all the student's best interest in mind. It is not productive to try and minimize the consequence of your child's actions. Allow your child to learn from his/her mistakes.

Emergency Procedures:

- All drivers are trained in emergency procedures.
- All buses have assigned 4 – 5 student emergency helpers.
- Bus evacuation drills are conducted once each semester on school grounds.
- All students are trained in emergency procedures each school year.
- Parents: In the event of an emergency, contact the school or transportation office for direction as to where to meet your child. For your own safety, do not go to the scene of an accident.
- In the event of an emergency students will only be released to parents after proper documentation and approval by school administration.

Communication Procedures:

- Drivers may contact parents directly to relay information to concerns regarding students or the route.
- Parents may contact the driver directly, call the school office, or transportation department regarding questions about their student or the route.
- Should conflicts arise, parents and transportation will jointly, in a civil manner work too resolve issues.
- Threats to any school employee is considered, by law, a Class D felony. IC: 35-44-2-1
- Allow two school days for the transportation department to return messages.