

## **Bus Transportation**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students and parents/guardians with general information about the Fowlerville Community Schools pupil transportation system. Public Act 187 of the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code outlines the pupil transportation laws that all school districts must follow. A copy of Public Act 187 is available for review during regular office hours in the Transportation Department. Select Fowlerville School's transportation policies, regulations, and safety rules are included in this handbook.

Fowlerville Community Schools operates a fleet of 32 school buses. We travel over 385,000 miles a year and transport approximately 2,000 students on a daily basis. We also provide transportation services for approximately 400 field trips and athletic events each year.

Fowlerville Community Schools is proud of its fleet of buses. We employ 2 full time licensed technicians who provide preventative maintenance and general repairs. The Michigan State Police inspect the fleet on an annual basis. For many years we have received outstanding inspection results helping to assure your student's safety.

At Fowlerville Community Schools, we strive for excellence in transportation services to you, our customers.

**Transportation of regular education students to and from school is not required by law. Please take time to read the following pages and review them with your children in order to protect your transportation privileges.**

It is the mutual responsibility of the parent/guardian and school district personnel to make a reasonable effort to understand and cooperate with each other regarding safe and orderly pupil transportation.

School bus transportation is provided only for eligible students and shall be considered a **PRIVILEGE** to be enjoyed only as long as the students accept responsibility for their own personal conduct and carefully follow all rules and regulations.

### **BUS ROUTES AND BUS STOPS**

Safety is the most important factor in transporting Fowlerville students. The following information is offered to help make pupil transportation safe and successful:

1. Bus stops and bus routes are established on the basis of safety, efficiency, the age of the students, and in accordance with State laws and recommendations and School Board policy. Buses must be visible for 400 feet in both directions at stops, and stops shall be at least 200 feet apart.

2. Bus stops will be placed at locations consistent with State laws and Board policy.
3. If a bus travels a section of road for one particular bus stop, a parent/guardian shall call the Transportation Dept. on days' transportation is not needed at that stop. If we do not receive a call for three (3) consecutive days, the bus will not stop again until the parent/guardian calls to resume transportation at that stop.

Please note: Due to circumstances that may or may not be under the control of the school district:

- The district reserves the right to change stops and routes when necessary.
- Walking distances and bus routes may be adjusted if necessary because of unsafe or impassable roads.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Become familiar with district policies, regulations, and principles of school bus safety.
2. Support safe riding practices.
3. Model, teach and hold their children accountable for appropriate behavior.
4. Make sure that their students arrive at the bus stop on time and be responsible for their student's going to, from, and at the bus stop.
5. Provide alternative transportation for their students if inappropriate items or animals must be transported to or from school or when a student's bus riding privileges are suspended for cause.
6. Work with school personnel to reinforce appropriate bus rider behavior.
7. A parent/guardian or other designated responsible person must be present at the bus stop for all kindergarten students. If not, students will be returned to the bus garage. The parent will be called and will be responsible for picking up the student.
8. Have a family plan if the student arrives home early or if parents/guardians are not present.
9. Drive students to school if they missed the bus at their designated stop. **It is extremely dangerous to follow the bus and/or have your student approach the bus from an unexpected location.**
10. Parents/Guardians who meet students at the stop should set the example and follow the same safety rules as the students.
11. Parent/Guardians are not allowed to board the bus at any given time. In addition, drivers are instructed that they refrain from conversations with parents/guardians while at bus stops. If you have a Transportation or a student concern, please contact the Transportation Dept. to arrange a phone conversation and /or meeting with the bus driver or Transportation Director @ 517-223-6122.

12. Always keep your emergency contact numbers at the school current. If there is an emergency on the bus, it is imperative that we be able to reach someone.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Be at your designated bus stop 10 minutes before the scheduled arrival of the bus. Drivers are instructed not to wait for students that are not at the stop and ready to board the bus. Missing the bus in the morning is considered an unexcused tardy/absence.
2. If you are required to cross the road, you must wait for the bus driver's "hand signal".
3. Stay at least 10 feet from the road while waiting for the bus. Bus riders must conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting. Do not attempt to enter or move toward any bus until it has been brought to a complete top, the door is opened and the driver can see the student approaching.
4. When leaving the bus, immediately move 10 feet away from the bus. Stay out of the danger zone. Do not stop at the mailbox or linger by the bus for any reason.
5. Leave the bus only at your designated bus stop, unless parents have made arrangements for an alternate stop following the Transportation Policy. **Drivers cannot accept notes. Friends are not allowed to ride the bus to or from school with friends.**
6. School buses are considered extensions of the classroom; therefore, classroom behavior must be observed. Avoid rowdiness, horseplay, and objectionable language.
7. The driver has the right to assign seats on the bus.
8. Cooperate with the bus driver and follow the bus driver's instructions the first time they are given.
9. Extend nothing, including head, hands and feet out of the bus windows. Never throw anything in the bus or out of the bus window or door.
10. Remain seated and out of the aisle at all times.
11. Limit objects that are brought on the bus to those that can be safely held on your lap. Always use a back pack for loose objects. Do not bring or use any items on the bus that could affect the health, safety, or security of any passenger. Examples: scooters, skateboards, glass, and animals may not be transported on the bus.
12. Talk quietly on the bus. You must be silent when approaching and crossing any railroad track.
13. There is no eating or drinking on any regular bus runs.
14. Be courteous to fellow students, the driver, and the driver's assistant.
15. Realize that ANY driver distraction is potentially hazardous to the safety of all passengers.

16. **IN AN EMERGENCY**-Remain seated in the bus unless directed by the driver to do otherwise. Never leave or enter through the emergency door unless instructed by the driver.

**Students who misbehave on the bus are also subject to disciplinary action at school, as specified in the Code of Conduct.**

### **P.M. BUS LOADING JH HS BUS LOT**

Students should never walk between or behind buses in the bus lot. Students should walk around the buses at the south end of the bus lot if they need to get to a bus on the opposite side of the lot. Once the lead bus honks, buses are going to start moving and students must immediately move out of the lot and onto the sidewalk. All students should be on the bus by the time the horn honks.

### **STUDENT CROSSING PROCEDURES**

Please review these important safety procedures with your children, and remind them often of the importance. Everyone needs to know that not all vehicles stop, as required by law, for the flashing red lights on the school bus.

#### **When crossing the street to board the bus:**

1. Students wait at the designated bus stop at least 10 feet away from the edge of the roadway until the bus comes to a complete stop, the flashing red lights are activated, and the door opens.
2. Look at the bus driver for the signal to safely cross.
3. Bus drivers will display a hand signal to indicate when it is safe to cross the road. If it is dark, drivers may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.
4. Students should always look both ways then proceed directly across the road always staying well in front of the bus and board the bus. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE".
5. Do not stop in the middle of the road or cross behind the bus.

#### **When crossing the street after leaving the bus:**

1. Students exit the bus and take 10 giant steps in front of the bus, staying on the side of the road. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!"
2. Students stay in a group and look at the bus driver for the signal to safely cross.
3. Bus drivers will display a hand signal to indicate when it is safe to cross the street. If it is dark, drivers may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.
4. Students proceed to a point even with the left side of the bus and STOP.
5. Students look left and right for passing cars before proceeding across the road.
6. Do not cross behind the bus.
7. Immediately move 10 feet away from the road.
8. If a paper or article goes under the school bus, do not go after it. Ask the driver for help.

9. Do not go to the mailbox or retrieve garbage cans, etc., until after the bus leaves.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

**PHILOSOPHY:** A school bus is a 25,000 pound, 45-foot long machine. To operate it requires training, skill, and concentration. It is imperative that student behavior on the bus not be allowed to distract the driver and put the riders' safety and lives at risk. All students can and must behave appropriately on the school bus to maintain a healthy, comfortable riding environment.

Cell phones, games, and other electronic devices can become a disruption on the bus. As such, drivers have the right to prohibit or restrict cell phone use as needed.

### **EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR THAT WOULD LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

**TIER ONE:** Tier one behaviors are problematic because they can be distracting to the driver or cause unnecessary noise or conflict on the bus. Examples are failure to follow bus rules, general noncompliance, issues with a sub driver, failure to remain seated, name calling, turning around in the seat, "messing with" other riders or their property, minor horseplay, etc. Tier one would follow the progression of interventions listed under "If a student chooses to break a rule" below.

**TIER TWO:** Tier two behaviors are likely to cause an unsafe situation or an unhealthy riding environment. Examples would be incidental profanity, unnecessary noise (SCREAMING, SHOUTING), major horseplay, disturbing or taking others' property without permission, sitting on the floor, hanging out the window, spitting, etc. Tier two incidents would likely result in a yellow ticket on a first occurrence because of the potential for an unsafe or unhealthy riding environment.

**TIER THREE:** Tier three behaviors cause an immediate threat to the safety of one or more riders or the driver. They are a serious disruption to safe transportation on the route. Violence against other students, verbal abuse, major profanity, obscene gestures, throwing things through the window of the bus (from outside or inside of the bus), opening any of the emergency egresses, bullying, vandalism and other damage to the bus, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, weapons, explosives, etc. are all examples of behaviors that would be classified at this level. Tier three incidents will result in immediate suspension from the bus and possibly from school as well. A red ticket will be part of the consequence for a tier three violation.

INNAPROPRIATE TOUCHING, OTHER SEXUAL COMMENTS, INUENDOS, AND BEHAVIORS-will receive a consequence based on the age of the student(s) and other mitigating factors. These behaviors will be investigated and generally warrant either tier two or tier three consequences.

### **IF A STUDENT CHOOSES TO BREAK A RULE:**

**Green Ticket** (frequently the first formal intervention except as noted above) will be sent home and to the appropriate administrator, and a robo-call will be made to phone numbers on file. The student **will not be allowed to board the bus** until the ticket is returned to the driver signed by the parent.

**Yellow ticket** (frequently the second formal intervention except as noted above) will be sent home and to the appropriate administrator. The driver will contact the parent, and bus privileges will be suspended for up to three days. The student **will not be allowed to board the bus** until the ticket is returned to the driver signed by the parent. Any student who is suspended from their bus is also suspended from bus transportation to or from field trips, athletic events, and the like during the suspension.

**Red ticket** (frequently the third formal intervention except as noted above) will be sent home and to the appropriate administrator. There will be a conference call with the driver, Director, and parent, and bus privileges will be suspended for an extended period or the student may have their riding privileges revoked. The student **will not be allowed to board the bus** until the ticket is returned to the driver signed by the parent. Any student who is suspended from their bus is also suspended from bus transportation to or from field trips, athletic events, and the like during the suspension.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING OR DELAY**

In the event of bad weather or other conditions that make it necessary to close school on a scheduled day, or if it is necessary to delay the start of school, the administration will notify WHMI radio (1350AM or 93.5 FM), WILX (TV 10) and WLNS (TV6).

During periods of inclement weather, parents/guardians and students are advised to monitor local radio and television stations for changes in school schedules. The media are contacted as soon as a decision is made to vary from the regular school schedule in order to notify parents/guardians as quickly as possible. If the weather looks threatening, parents/guardians are encouraged to-stay tuned to the local news media for updates.

If it is necessary to have a **SCHOOL DELAY** (fog, ice, snow etc.), school will start 2 hours late.

Smith Elementary...517-223-6005

Kreeger Elementary...517-223-6006

Fowlerville Junior High...517-223-6003

Fowlerville High School...517-223-6002

Little Glad Center...517-223-6480

Central Office...517-223-6001

Transportation...517-223-6122

***FOWLERVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WEBSITE...[fowlervilleschools.org](http://fowlervilleschools.org)***