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BUS CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

For students, bus drivers, operators, school principals and parents/guardians

SCHOOL STUDENTS ON BUSES

It is every student's responsibility to behave in a manner that ensures the safety and comfort of passengers and drivers. This includes:

Behaviour on buses:

- Use appropriate language not offensive or racist language
- Fighting, spitting, feet on seats, throwing things in or from the bus is not permitted
- No eating or drinking (other than water) – unless for medical reasons or the bus operator gives written permission.
- Offer seats to adults including people with a disability, elderly or expectant mothers
- Do not push or shove other people
- Do not bully or harass other passengers or the driver
- Avoid attracting the attention of the driver except in the case of emergency
- Do not play music at such volume that it may distract the bus driver or other passengers

Safety on and near buses:

- Obey reasonable directions from the driver (e.g. where to sit or to remain in the bus)
- Remain in your seat – do not move around the bus unnecessarily
- If standing, remain behind the front passenger seat and keep a secure hand hold at all times
- Keep bags and other items clear of the aisle
- Do not allow any part of your body to protrude out of the bus at any time
- Wait for the bus in a quiet and orderly manner – including at bus interchanges
- Stand away from the roadside until the bus comes to a complete stop
- Allow other passengers to leave the bus before stepping onto the bus in a single line
- Wait until the bus stops before moving to get off the bus at your designated stop
- Wait until the bus leaves the stop and you have clear vision before crossing the road
- Cross the road where and when it's safe to do so, use crossings/traffic lights where available

Legal considerations on buses:

- Wear the seat belt properly adjusted and fastened, if one is available
- Obey the law that bans smoking on buses
- Ensure that buses are not vandalised – report any damage, e.g. graffiti and window etching, to the driver
- Do not interfere with bus property, equipment and signage

- Do not leave rubbish on the bus, or at bus stops or interchanges

Using bus passes:

- Show travel passes or tickets to the driver on boarding and to Authorised Revenue Protection Officers, NSW Police Officers or bus company representative when requested
- Use the travel pass only for its intended purpose – do not lend your pass to other students or borrow a pass from them
- Swipe or 'dip' passes in ticket readers if available when boarding
- If issued with a School Opal card, always tap on when boarding and tap off when leaving the bus

Roles and responsibilities for Students

STUDENTS

Students will:

- behave courteously and respectfully in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- follow reasonable instructions from the driver (e.g. to wear a seat belt properly adjusted and fastened, where one is available; where to sit or to remain in the bus when the driver is awaiting assistance from the NSW Police)
- report any unsafe behaviour to the driver/their school

Students may have the following expectations of the bus driver and operator:

- safe travel
- be treated with courtesy and respect
- travel free from verbal and physical abuse or any form of bullying, intimidation and harassment

When in possession of a school bus travel pass, students must:

- show it to the Driver, Authorised Revenue Protection Officers, NSW Police Officers or bus company representatives when requested
- dip or swipe their pass in the appropriate ticket machine if available
- always tap on and tap off if they have been issued with a School Opal card
- travel only on the designated school bus route or, if travelling with a School Opal card, only on approved bus operators and at approved times of day
- keep their pass for their own use – not lend to, or borrow passes from other students

Student's parents/guardians should call 131 500 or email concessions@transport.nsw.gov.au quoting the student's name, address and school if the console shows the School Opal card is not valid.

Consequences for breach of the Code of Conduct:

- depending on the degree of misbehaviour, students may have their pass suspended or may be refused travel on the bus for a period of time determined by the bus operator in accordance with these Guidelines
- heavier penalties may apply to students involved in dangerous or group misbehaviour
- school Principals have the right to take additional disciplinary action against a student under the school's policies related to student behaviour for any breach of the Code of Conduct
- NSW Police may take action against students in the case of suspected criminal behaviour

Right to seek review of penalties:

If a student has reason to believe that a bus driver has treated him or her unfairly, they can raise the issue with their parents or guardians. Parents/guardians can then contact the bus operator or TFNSW for a review of the penalty.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- ensuring that their child understands the Code of Conduct
- disclosing to the bus operator and school Principal any disability or personal circumstances that may affect the student's behaviour and any plans or strategies to support students with particular needs to facilitate safe travel
- if meeting their child at the bus stop, never wait on the opposite side of the road
- communicating with the bus operator and school Principal to discuss their child's misbehaviour and its consequences if the child's behaviour has breached the Code of Conduct and the operator has requested a meeting
- treating bus operators and their employees respectfully and courteously

Parents/guardians may have the following expectations:

- safe travel for their children and young people
- be treated with courtesy and respect
- receive accurate information about the behaviour of students
- have concerns listened to and considered in a timely manner

Parents/guardians should be aware that:

- the Code of Conduct for students is printed on the School Student Transport Scheme paper application form and available on the online application form, and in signing the form, the parents/guardians explicitly declare that:
 - they support the Code of Conduct; and
 - that it has been explained to their child.
- TFNSW will hold records of student behaviour in accordance with these Guidelines
- school Principals may release parent/guardian's contact details to a bus operator in the event of any possible action by the operator
- automated ticketing can be used to assist in identifying those students who were travelling on a particular bus where a breach of the Code of Conduct occurred
- bus operators may advise school Principals of students that have travelled on a bus that has been damaged by a student through inappropriate behaviour
- if students are refused travel, parents/guardians will need to make alternative travel arrangements and meet any costs of such transport (parents/guardians are not eligible for the TFNSW Private Vehicle Conveyance Scheme in such circumstances unless the child or young person is assessed as eligible)
- bus operators record student misbehaviour on the TFNSW Student Misbehaviour Database
- bus operators keep any correspondence sent to parents or the school for a one year period from the date of the incident
- bus operators may review images derived from bus security camera systems (where installed) to substantiate claims of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

If a student is refused travel:

- the operator must first notify the child's parents/guardians, the school Principal and TFNSW of the decision in writing (including by email) and verbally before a travel ban takes place

- where a travel pass has been suspended, the bus operator will decide and advise parents/guardians of the arrangement to reclaim the travel pass at the end of the suspension period
- if parents/guardians have questions about any decisions made by bus operators regarding student misbehaviour, they should take the matter up with the bus operator in the first instance
- parents/guardians may ask a bus operator to review a decision if a change in the child's behaviour can be demonstrated during the suspension period and parents/guardians remain dissatisfied with the operator's decision, they may contact the nearest office of TFNSW.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS (OR DELEGATES)

School Principals play a key role in advising students of their responsibilities and the consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct.

School Principals can support the Code of Conduct by:

- supplying the contact details of parents/guardians to bus operators if consultation between parents/guardians and the bus operator is necessary and consent has been provided to the Principal by the parents/guardians to disclose their contact details
- disclosing to the bus operator (only with the parents'/guardians consent) any disability or personal circumstances that may affect the student's behaviour, and any plans or strategies to support a particular student to facilitate safe travel
- providing assistance in managing breaches of the Code of Conduct in consultation with the relevant bus operator and parent/guardian
- display the Code of Conduct brochure on school noticeboards, in newsletters and student diaries.

BUS DRIVERS

Bus drivers are responsible for the general operation of buses, including:

- driving in a safe manner and taking reasonable care for the safety of all passengers in accordance with the provisions of the *Road Rules 2014 (NSW)*, *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)* and any relevant provisions of the *Heavy Vehicle National Law (NSW)*
- holding a current Working with Children Check
- holding a Bus Driver Authority and complying with the conditions and the requirements of the *Passenger Transport Regulation 2007* and *Passenger Transport Act 1990*
- behaving with civility and propriety towards all passengers and providing reasonable directions to ensure the safety and comfort of all passengers, including students. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that passengers are made aware of the need to wear seat belts when travelling on the bus; **Under no circumstances should a driver physically intervene when a student refuses to wear a seatbelt**
- respecting the privacy of personal information provided to them regarding the disability or personal circumstances of any student
- taking steps to mitigate potential unacceptable behaviour and to facilitate safe travel, particularly where the driver has been notified in advance of a disability or personal circumstances that may affect a student's behaviour
- ensuring that all incidents of misbehaviour (even minor ones) are reported to the bus operator in a manner required by the company
- notifying the bus operator of any safety hazards whilst picking up or dropping off students

- contacting the bus operator for clarification of correct procedures if there is any uncertainty in relation to student misbehaviour

Bus drivers have the following expectations:

- be treated with courtesy and respect by students, parents/guardians and school staff
- receive help and support from the bus operator, parents/guardians and schools as required

Where a student breaches the Code of Conduct the bus driver will:

- advise the student that their behaviour was inappropriate and of the consequences of the offence, e.g. that the pass may be withdrawn
- obtain the student's name and school or School Opal card number (directly from the student or from the travel pass)
- issue an interim pass in place of the school bus travel pass if the bus operator has a system of interim passes in place
- advise the student that their behaviour will be investigated by their bus operator
- record the incident as part of the driver's own record in a situation where a formal warning is to be issued
- report breaches of the Code of Conduct to the bus operator
- report to the bus operator when repeated attempts by the driver to control misbehaviour have been unsuccessful

CATEGORIES OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

To promote consistency and fairness in responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct, inappropriate behaviour has been divided into three categories.

If students are refused travel, parents/guardians must make alternative travel arrangements and meet any associated travel costs of that transport. They will not be eligible for the TfNSW Private Vehicle Conveyance Scheme under these circumstances (unless the child or young person is assessed as eligible).

Category 1 - Unacceptable behaviour

This category includes minor offences, but is not limited to behaviour that may be irritating or unpleasant. Examples include:

- distracting the driver by persistent noise or calling out to the driver
- displaying materials of an offensive, obscene, pornographic, threatening, abusive or defamatory nature on a device such as mobile phone, iPad or laptop computer
- failing to wear the seat belt properly adjusted and fastened, if one is available
- failing to show a travel pass (except where passes are not issued)
- eating or drinking (other than water) on the bus, unless for medical reasons or with the written permission of the bus operator
- smoking a product e.g. tobacco or a similar substance, including e-cigarettes
- using offensive or racist language
- pressing the stop button continually
- behaving so as to adversely affect the comfort or safety of other passengers
- not offering seats to adult passengers including people with a disability, elderly or expectant mothers
- playing music loudly and being a general nuisance
- groups of students participating in Category 1 unacceptable behaviours.

Category 2 - Dangerous behaviour

This category includes more serious offences, but is not limited to behaviour that may cause an element of danger to individuals. Examples include:

- bullying, intimidation and harassment of other passengers
- allowing any part of their body to protrude from the bus while the bus is in motion
- stopping others from disembarking at their stop
- verbally threatening the driver
- standing on steps or in areas not set aside for standing and refusing to sit down
- pushing and shoving when boarding or exiting the bus
- swinging on bus handrails
- throwing things inside or out of the bus
- fighting with other passengers
- causing damage to property in buses
- spitting or discharging other bodily fluids (including urine and mucous)
- exposing body parts
- groups of students participating in Category 2 dangerous behaviours

Category 3 – Highly dangerous or life-threatening behaviour

This category includes major offences, but is not limited to highly dangerous behaviour. Examples include:

- pushing students out of the doors or windows
- interfering with the driving controls or the emergency door release
- assaulting the driver or other passengers
- interfering with safety equipment
- recklessly or negligently endangering the safety of other passengers or themselves
- carrying a weapon (including replica weapons) or dangerous items
- using matches, lighters or other flammable items.

If appropriate, the bus driver should report any incident involving highly dangerous or life-threatening behaviour to the NSW Police.

The list of examples above is not intended to be exhaustive, but should be used as a guide by drivers and operators in relation to the management of behaviour on their buses.

DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

The penalties in the table below reflect the category of misbehaviour, offence and penalty. They ensure that all students who misbehave are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner regardless of which bus operator is involved.

Table of penalties for school student misbehaviour Category of misbehaviour	Type of offence	Penalty
Unacceptable Behaviour	First Offence	Warning (no penalty)
	Second Offence	
	Subsequent Offences	
	Up to 2 weeks suspension	
	Up to 10 weeks suspension (permanent suspension may apply for further offences)	
Dangerous Behaviour	First Offence	Up to 4 weeks suspension

Second Offence	Up to 10 weeks suspension	
Subsequent Offences	Possible permanent suspension may apply	
Highly Dangerous/Life Threatening Behaviour	First Offence	Up to 12 months suspension (or in the most extreme cases, permanent suspension)
Subsequent Offence	Up to 12 months suspension (or in the most extreme cases, permanent suspension)	