

Dear Parents of O.E.I.S.D. Bus Riders:

We welcome you back to the 2016-2017 school year. We look forward to a great school year ahead and, we are grateful for our partnership with you as we work together to provide safe and quality transportation services for your child.

The information below is reflective of “practices” that have been reviewed and refined for communicating necessary steps to our parents in order to assure student safety for all Odem-Edroy I.S.D. bus riders.

Please note that an “OEISD Student Bus Rider Pamphlet” has been created as an additional resource for you that can be accessed on the district website at www.oeisd.org. The pamphlet will be presented at the “**PARENT-STUDENT BUS RIDER Mandatory Meeting**” on **August 18th, 2016 from 5:30-7:00 PM** (Elementary Cafeteria). Please call with any questions at 368-8121, Ext. 266 or email Mr. Isidro Reyna our Transportation Director at reynai@oeisd.org for additional information.

POLICY: BUS STOPS

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All students who use District transportation shall board busses at authorized stops. Authorized bus stops shall be designated annually by the superintendent or designee. Bus Drivers shall load and unload passengers only at authorized stops.

To further explain, authorized stops and designated bus routes are based on the addresses of the students eligible to receive transportation as outlined in the district policy.

Our policy does allow a parent to designate a grandparent’s address or a child care facility if on our approved designated routes, to serve as the alternate residence for student transportation drop off locations. Those are the only exceptions in policy regarding dropping a student off at a location other than the child’s residence and that alternate location must be an approved stop.

PRACTICES: DROPPING STUDENTS OFF AT A RESIDENCE OTHER THAN THEIR OWN

Each school district implements “practices” to assure the policy adopted is upheld. In our case, it has been the practice to require students wishing to be dropped off at a different address other than their residence, must have a signed note by the parent to be provided to the driver. We have determined that this practice is the best one for *student safety*.

As a practice, we have also allowed our parents to call and request bus drop off locations to be changed for the day. However, in order to assure student safety, we will not be able to receive phone calls any longer to request that a child ride a different bus.

We will require our parents to provide us a signed note by 2:30PM listing the name of the person and the address of the requested drop off location. If this location is part of the

designated approved bus routes, the district will be able to accommodate this request for bus riders.

The *principal* on each campus will initial the signed notes received by the parent and provide to the driver/transportation department by bus departure time that begins around 3:25 PM in the district. If signed notes are received by 2:30 PM, this allows ample time for the school to receive the note and to get it in the hands of the driver/transportation department by departure times.

We appreciate your support and thank you in advance for your cooperation with this request. Our drivers wanted to take this opportunity to thank our parents for having *students ready for pick-up times in the mornings* and for *reminding their children of bus safety rules* which also help assure student safety at all times. (Campus Handbooks provided to all students listing the rules)

In closing, a special thank you to all of our Odem-Edroy I.S.D. parents and our goal remains the same which is to provide safe and quality services to all of our riders. We appreciate your support in meeting this goal. If you should have questions regarding this letter, please feel free to call your child's principal or Mr. Reyna to discuss this notification and your specific questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa A. Gonzales, Superintendent of Schools, Odem-Edroy I.S.D.

Policies & Procedures: Bus Discipline & Student Transportation

The Odem-Edroy I.S.D. Transportation Department is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of each student. Riding in a district transportation vehicle is a privilege offered to students who reside within the district. All students being transported are under the authority of the bus driver and must obey his or her requests. Procedures and safety rules help ensure the safety and protection of each student. Failure to meet these standards or follow these safety rules and procedures may result in student conflicts or injuries and also cause delays or distractions to the driver. Any student failing to follow the rules and procedures will receive a Discipline Report turned in by the bus driver to the campus principal. The principal will determine the appropriate disciplinary measure which can include temporary or permanent removal of transportation privileges. Those students who fail to abide by these rules and procedures can lose their riding privileges and will be disciplined. Parents of students who damage OEISD property (including bus seats) are responsible for retribution to OEISD. Any questions dealing with bus routes or problems on the bus are referred to the OEISD Transportation Department at 368-8121 ext. 266

Procedures and Safety Rules

While waiting to load:

- Arrive at the stop earlier than the scheduled loading time. Remain out of the street and don't

create a problem for the owner of the property where the stop is located.

- When the bus approaches, stay away from the curb and the front wheel of the bus. Get in a line when the bus approaches. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop, and wait for the driver's signal to cross/board.
- Board carefully and use the handrail. Be courteous and do not push or shove. Move quickly to your assigned seat.

While riding:

1. Remain completely seated, facing forward, with all body parts inside the bus. Never extend arms, hands, heads, or objects through bus windows. Standing or moving from seat to seat while the bus is in motion is not allowed.
2. Respect the rights of other students. Do not violate their space, nor physically or emotionally harm them.
3. Do not participate in an event which causes the driver to be distracted from driving. Refrain from unnecessary conversation with the bus driver.
4. Store your carry-on book bags in your lap, against the wall at your seat, or in the seat designated by the driver. Never allow bags to block an exit window or any part of the aisle. In an emergency, no time is available to clear the path to safety.
5. Obey the bus driver's requests.
6. Never throw anything while on the bus.
7. Talk in normal tones without using loud or vulgar language. Classroom conduct is expected.
8. No food and/or drink are allowed.
9. Keep the bus clean.
10. Do not bring glass containers or animals on the bus.

While unloading:

1. As the bus approaches your stop, gather your belongings, but remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop.
2. Move to the door quickly so other traffic will not be delayed. Use the handrail while

descending the stairs.

3. Step down to the ground carefully and walk directly away from the bus at least two steps before turning to the left or right. Never walk alongside the bus or anywhere within 3 feet of the rear tires.
4. If you must cross the road, move at least 15 feet in front of the bus and wait for the driver's signal to cautiously move into the roadway, directly in front of the driver's side of the bus. You will check left- right-left yourself and wait for the driver's second signal to cross the remainder of the road.

Bus Violations

Students who refuse to obey the directions of the bus driver promptly or refuse to obey regulations shall forfeit their right to ride the bus. Failure to comply with bus rules and regulations may result in the following consequences:

- **1st Incident/Step:** Verbal warning from the bus driver
- **2nd Incident/Step:** Assigned Seat by the driver.
- **3rd Incident/Step:** Bus Conduct Report to campus Assistant Principal resulting in student conference and parent contact.
- **4th Incident/Step:** Bus Conduct Report as in 3rd incident with “detention assigned for the student.
- **5th Incident/Step:** Bus Conduct Report as in the 3rd incident with suspension from transportation for a 1-3 day period.
- **6th Incident/Step:** Bus Conduct Report as in the 3rd incident with suspension from transportation for 3-10 days.
- **7th Incident/Step:** Suspension from Transportation privileges for the remainder of the school year; reinstatement requires an administrative conference.

Changes in Routes/Stops

Students who plan to go to another destination other than their regular destination must give the campus office a written request from their parents. This permission request will then be fax to the Transportation Department to be given to the driver who will retain the request.

Parents or others may not remove a student from the bus without permission from the campus principal who will notify transportation. Identification will be requested prior to the student's being removed from the bus.

Extracurricular/Activity Trips

School trips will be arranged through the office. A sponsor/chaperon will be on each bus. Students may not be released to friends or any person except the sponsor or the student's parent unless prior arrangements have been made with the campus principal/personnel prior to the trip. While the driver is responsible for the overall safety of each student, the sponsor/chaperon is responsible for the management of the students while at the event or route.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

For safe riding on the school bus, parents/guardians are part of a successful team effort. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Are expected to encourage their children to learn and obey the school bus safety rules and to exhibit appropriate conduct while on their way to or from the bus stop, at the bus stop and while on the bus.
2. Are responsible for instructing their children about the location of their bus stop and advising them to get off only at their designated stop.
3. Are expected to have their children at the designated stop at least (5) minutes before the scheduled bus time.
4. Are responsible for observed acts of vandalism of the bus, private property or school property. Such conduct shall not be tolerated, restitution will be sought.
5. Parents/guardians cannot be transported on or from a bus route.
6. Are to arrange for their students to have all necessary supplies, materials, etc., in pouch, packet or backpack. In line with State Regulation, animals are not to be transported on the bus unless specified in the student's IEP.
7. Toys, items in glass containers, or other dangerous objects, as well as large instruments or class projects shall not be transported on the bus. The aisle and the doors must be kept clear at all times. If an item is too large for the student to hold, it cannot be transported on the bus.
8. Prescribed medication that is to be transported to school for use during the day must be appropriately labeled and transported in a backpack or parcel and kept in the students possession during transport. Exception – if the student is unable to do this, the driver may care for it until the student gets to school.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE DRIVER/ATTENDANT ADMINISTER MEDICATION!

Only health care providers accompanying students as specified in the student's IEP will be authorized to administer medication during transport.

Student Responsibilities

In order to ensure the safety of all students whether on the bus, walking to or from the bus, or loading/unloading the following guidelines shall be observed :

1. Students who are compelled to walk a distance to meet the bus must walk on the side of the road facing traffic, except on divided or multi-lane roadways.
2. Students must be at their designated bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time. The bus driver will not wait for students not making an effort to reach the bus. Students receiving modified service shall be ready at the assigned pick-up time.
3. Students shall exhibit safe and appropriate behavior when waiting for and boarding the bus.
4. Students must obey the driver promptly. Other staff may be assigned to ride the bus; they too are authorized to enforce student discipline.
5. Students shall not get on or off the bus while it is in motion. They must remain seated and keep the aisle and exits clear.
6. They must sit in seat assigned by the driver. On small buses, all passengers must wear a seat belt.
7. Students shall not tamper with the bus; they are not to sit in the driver's seat.
8. Students should not carry unnecessary conversation with the bus driver.
9. Students shall not use lewd or profane language on the bus; neither shall they use obscene gestures. They should exhibit a cooperative attitude.
10. Rough or boisterous conduct will not be permitted on the bus. Students will not be allowed to throw things in or outside of the bus.
11. Students shall not eat or drink on the bus. They should cooperate with the driver in keeping the bus clean.

Examples of Major Infractions:

1. Any action that endangers the safety of the bus, the driver or other students.
2. Use or possession of tobacco, rugs, alcohol, etc.
3. Deliberate disregard for safety (opening the emergency door, trying to ride on the outside of the bus) etc.
4. Vandalism to the bus.
5. Bringing firearms, knives or other dangerous objects on the bus.