

# BUS BEHAVIOUR & DISCIPLINE



**DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
Catholic Education: Learning and Living in Faith

*This guide was created through a partnership with the Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS), bus operators, the Durham District School Board (DDSB) and the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB). It is designed to support school and Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS) staff as they foster the development of safe and positive climates on the bus; for transportation to and from school and for excursions.*



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*Note: For the purposes of this resource the term bus refers to any vehicle used to transport students and/or staff for school activities, e.g., school buses, taxis, coach buses and minivans*

*Within this document, assume that the word "parent" refers to parent or guardian*

# WHY THIS RESOURCE?

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE IS TO

- reinforce the necessity that students, staff and bus drivers have a safe, positive experience while they are on the bus
- provide direction on the implementation of bias-free progressive discipline when there is an incident on the bus
- reinforce that school and Durham Student Transportation Services staff, bus operators and bus drivers, students and parents have a responsibility to work together to establish a positive, safe climate on the bus
- explain that the bus should be viewed as an extension of the "school", and as a result the expectations within the School Code of Conduct and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline apply to the bus

## THIS RESOURCE CAN BE USED TO

- help establish a positive, safe climate on the bus
- communicate expectations for staff, students and parents in order to maintain and sustain a positive, safe climate on the bus
- outline how the School Code of Conduct should be applied to the bus
- guide in the investigation of infractions that occur on the bus, and the implementation of bias-free progressive discipline
- support existing policies, regulations, procedures and resources related to transportation and safety

## THIS RESOURCE ADDRESSES

- The development of a positive, safe environment on the bus
- The roles and responsibilities for bus safety
- The application of the School Code of Conduct into a bus setting
- The use of bullying prevention and intervention on the bus
- The effective use of bias-free progressive discipline in response to an incident on the bus
- The use of a proper investigation when addressing an incident on the bus
- Support for students with special needs who ride the bus
- The use of self-regulation to support student behaviour on the bus
- Conducting a proper investigation when addressing an incident on a bus
- Strategies for engaging and informing parents in the process



## SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

**THE SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT REFLECTS THE BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT AND PROVINCIAL POLICY, AND OUTLINES THE FOLLOWING:**

- That a school is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility and safety in the teaching and learning environments, including the bus
- That all staff, students and parents have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community, including when they ride the bus. With this right comes the responsibility to follow the expectations in the School Code of Conduct, and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety and dignity of others
- Sets clear standards of behaviour, and specifies the consequences for student actions that do not comply with these standards
- The standards of behaviour apply not only to students and staff, but also to all individuals involved in the school system, including parents and volunteers whether they are on school property, on the bus or at school-authorized events

## THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT IS TO:

- promote the safety of staff, students, parents and community members in the schools. This includes the safety of students, school staff and DSTS staff on the bus
- ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity
- promote responsible citizenship by encouraging positive participation in the school community, and positive behaviours while on the bus
- maintain an environment in which conflict and differences can be addressed and resolved in a respectful manner
- discourage the use of alcohol and illegal drugs
- prevent bullying in schools and on the bus
- recognize, accept, and be sensitive to equity and inclusiveness
- ensure that bias-free progressive discipline is used to address inappropriate student behaviours, including incidents that occur on the bus

## BIAS-FREE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Bias-free progressive discipline utilizes a continuum of prevention strategies to foster and reinforce positive behaviour, and to help students make good choices. It includes the use of age-appropriate interventions, supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour. The bias-free progressive discipline measures used in response to inappropriate behaviour are both corrective and supportive.

### HOW DOES BIAS-FREE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE WORK?

- Involves staff, parents and students working together to create a positive climate at school and on the bus, to support student success and well-being
- Supports a shared vision and ensures the use of common practices that encourages positive behaviour and promotes healthy relationships, growth and positive development in students
- Involves staff taking proactive, individualized and progressive measures when dealing with discipline, including incidents that occur on the bus
- Fosters a caring, safe, inclusive and accepting learning environment for everyone
- Ensures that all students, parents, and other community members are welcomed, respected and valued
- Includes prevention and early intervention strategies to support positive student behaviour
- Engages parents and community partners, and accesses professional supports for students, when appropriate

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BUS SAFETY

All stakeholders are responsible for bus safety, and are required to adhere to the policies and procedures set out by the DSTS. The bus is an extension of the classroom, and as a result all stakeholders must adhere to the expectations outlined in the School Code of Conduct and DSTS policies and procedures.

## **DURHAM STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

- Provide safe and efficient transportation services
- Have policies, procedures and safety measures available and communicated to parents
- Organize safety programs to promote awareness and bus safety and conduct on the bus
- Maintain contact with the bus operator and principals or vice principals to ensure safety
- Support bus drivers and schools in maintaining student conduct on the bus
- Respond to all parental and school based enquiries and requests in a professional manner

## **BUS OPERATOR**

- Audit bus driver performance periodically or at the request of DSTS
- Provide ongoing professional development to bus drivers with respect to safe driving, customer service and/or handling challenging situations
- Work co-operatively with the principal or vice principal, parents and DSTS when disputes or problems arise

## **BUS DRIVER**

- Be courteous and professional at all times when dealing with students, members of the school community and parents
- Consistently enforce rules and expectations set out for students
- Complete *Transportation Communication Reports* in a timely manner
- Respect students and parents based on the expectations outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code

## **PRINCIPAL OR VICE PRINCIPAL**

- Be responsible for students after the arrival and before the departure of the bus
- Communicate to students and parents that the School Code of Conduct applies to the bus
- Investigate incidents of student misconduct or safety concerns. Advise parents and DSTS
- Ensure that bias-free progressive discipline is applied appropriately to minimize the chances that another incident will occur and to ensure bus safety. Advise parents and DSTS

## PARENTS

- Be responsible for student safety and conduct prior to pick up and after departure from the bus
- Recognize that student transportation is a privilege, not a right, and based on Bias-Free Progressive Discipline may be suspended if expectations are not met
- Cooperate with the bus driver, bus operator, DSTS and the principal or vice principal to ensure that their child conducts himself or herself in an appropriate manner on the bus
- Reinforce with their child the expectations for safe behaviour on the bus based on the School Code of Conduct and DSTS policies and procedures
- Support the implementation of Bias-Free Discipline in response to an incident on the bus
- Pay for damages resulting from vandalism and/or willful damage by their child to the school bus should the need arise
- Remind students about respecting private and personal property when waiting at a DSTS designated stop
- Be courteous and respectful to the bus driver at all times. The parent is responsible for raising any concerns with the principal/vice principal or DSTS staff not directly with the bus driver
- Notify the school or DSTS of any situation occurring at a stop or on the bus that may have compromise student safety

## STUDENTS

- Respect other people's property and belongings while waiting for the bus
- Treat the driver with respect and follow his or her instructions
- Be courteous and respectful to others on the bus at all times
- Act appropriately in a manner that does not endanger the safety of themselves or others including:
  - Not engaging in any activity that interferes with the safe operation of the bus
  - Remaining seated at all times, facing forward
  - Keeping hands, arms, feet, head and belongings inside the vehicle at all times
  - Avoiding distracting or speaking to the bus driver except in the case of emergency
  - Refraining from inappropriate behaviour on the bus, e.g., throwing items, swearing, fighting, bullying, eating or drinking
  - Not bringing alcohol, drugs or weapons onto the bus
  - Not touching safety equipment or emergency exits unless there is an emergency
- Be responsible to the principal or vice principal for their conduct on the bus
- Be liable for any damage done deliberately to the bus

# CREATING A SAFE, POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT ON THE BUS

A positive school environment or climate can be defined as “the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm” (Safe Schools Action Team Report, 2006).

## THE FOLLOWING ARE IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A POSITIVE, SAFE ENVIRONMENT ON THE BUS:

- Healthy relationships are promoted among all those who ride the bus
- Everyone feels safe, welcomed, accepted and included
- Equity and diversity is honoured and respected
- Students are encouraged to be leaders and positive role models
- School and DSTS staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop and sustain a positive safe environment on the bus
- Expectations for positive, safe behaviour are clearly communicated, modelled and followed

## STRATEGIES TO FOSTER A SAFE, POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT ON THE BUS

**The following outlines suggestions for fostering a safe, positive environment on the bus:**

- Communicate the expectations for the School Code of Conduct and for Bias-Free Progressive Discipline to students, school and DSTS staff and parents on a regular basis (DSTS staff will inform bus drivers and bus operators). Consider having the information available in languages other than just English
- The school-based Safe and Accepting Schools Team should use data, such as the School Climate Surveys, to develop and help implement a Safe Schools Plan that includes bullying prevention and intervention. This plan should include how the expectations and interventions apply to the bus
- The Safe Schools Plan should include how a positive school climate can be developed and sustained on the bus by building relationships based on mutual respect supported by; equitable and inclusive interventions; the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and character development
- Seek to understand the potential reasons for student misbehaviour on the bus in order to help determine the most appropriate bias-free progressive discipline intervention
- Create and implement the bus seating plan for all students



- Assign leadership roles to students, e.g., "Bus Buddies", when appropriate
- Implement a variety of preventative bias-free progressive discipline proactive strategies, e.g., using the School Code of Conduct to collaboratively develop expectations for bus safety with students, and then communicating these expectations to parents
- Build positive relationships with students and parents, and working in partnership to address behavioural issues
- Foster the development of self-regulation strategies for students as a proactive measure. Provide students with the self-regulation tools they need to successfully ride the bus and facilitate their use, e.g., allowing the student to wear noise cancelling headphones and/or use a "fidget ball"
- Ensure that staff provide appropriate supervision while loading and unloading the bus and during the bus ride, and respond to and report to a principal or vice principal concerning behaviour
- While supervising, staff should model appropriate, positive behaviours. Examples include:
  - Addressing situations from a place of calm, care and support
  - Noticing and recognizing desired behaviour
- The principal or vice principal should use Restorative Practice to help resolve issues, including using the Restorative Practice questions
- When applying bias-free progressive discipline, the principal or vice principal may wish to consult with support staff, e.g., the Special Education teacher, to determine which intervention will best help the student understand the consequences of his or her actions, and determine how his or her behaviour will improve in the future
- Parents should understand how the School Code of Conduct and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline were applied to address the incident that occurred on the bus
- Pertinent information is documented using the *Transportation Communication Report*

**It is important to create and sustain a positive, safe climate in the school and on the bus.**



# CREATING A SAFE, POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT ON THE BUS CONT'D

## THE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TO SUPPORT A POSITIVE, SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Restorative Practice is a way of "being" that helps strengthen relationships to support student well-being and achievement. Restorative Practice should be used as a proactive way to build a positive, safe climate, and as a responsive way to help maintain, and restore community when needed.

Restorative Practice is based upon nine interconnected elements. These elements provide the foundation to cultivate caring and healthy communities. The elements include healthy relationships; voice; fair process; structure and support; safety; empathy and perspective-taking; ownership; learning; and, belonging and interdependence. These elements help shape a positive climate at school and on the bus.

Restorative Practice questions can be used as a responsive strategy when there is an incident on the bus. The Restorative Practice questions are designed to elicit the essential elements of bias-free progressive discipline. The questions provide a framework that may be used to lead a conversation that examines what went wrong, what the impact was, and how to move forward in a positive manner.



### THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED WHEN THINGS GO WRONG:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

### THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE USED WHEN SOMEONE HAS BEEN HARMED:

- What were you thinking when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

## SELF-REGULATION: UNDERSTANDING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

A student's behaviour can be affected by excessive stress due to factors such as lack of sleep, sensitivity to noise, and conflict with others. How stress impacts a student varies, as does how the student may self-regulate in order to achieve a state of calm and alertness. Signs of stress behaviour might include increased impulsivity, difficulty ignoring distractions and/or trouble listening. A student's stress behaviour may be heightened while he or she rides on the bus as a result of factors such as the noise on the bus or the motion of the bus.

### When dealing with stress behaviour, it is important to help the student:

- learn what it feels like to be calm;
- figure out what is causing the stress
- identify and implement strategies or activities to reduce the stressors, and help him or her get back to calm, e.g., use noise-cancelling headphones while riding the bus

(Merit Centre, 2018)

**Self-Regulation will be used to assist students in being calm and attentive while they are riding the bus.**

## **BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION ON THE BUS**

The Ontario Ministry of Education has provided a definition of bullying that is to be used by all schools. This definition needs to be outlined in the School Code of Conduct and in the School Bullying and Intervention Plan (Refer to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, 2012 for the Ministry of Education's definition of bullying). This definition is also helpful in making distinctions between what is conflict and what is bullying. In both the School Code of Conduct and in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP), it is important to reinforce that behaviour expectations also apply to buses. In addition, it must be clearly stated that bullying will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on the bus, or in any other circumstances (e.g., online) where engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the school climate.

The BPIP is an important component of a whole school approach that supports student well-being and to fostering a positive school climate. Each school must develop a BPIP in consultation with students, staff, parents, and community partners, and then post the BPIP on the school website. Since the BPIP needs to include the bus, it is important that data about incidents on the bus be used to inform the BPIP. Data about incidents that occur on the bus can be gathered from the *Transportation Communication Reports* and/or the use of student focus groups. This data should be used to monitor the success of the preventative strategies and interventions.



**The BPIP outlines goals to address and prevent bullying. An example of a BPIP goal that would apply to the bus is as follows:**

**THIS GOAL WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE FOLLOWING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES:**

- Students are taught how to identify their stressors
- Students are provided with strategies to address their stressors to allow them to be calm, alert and ready to learn
- Students are provided with self-regulation tools that apply to the classroom, and the bus, e.g., noise-cancelling head phones or a “fidget ball”

Schools highlight the work they are doing in bullying prevention and intervention during events such as during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, and Pink Shirt Day. It is important to include activities that are applicable to bullying that may occur on the bus, e.g., an “Upstander” Program for the bus during these events.

An important aspect of the BPIP is the inclusion of mechanisms to report bullying. The BPIP should include how students report bullying that occurs on the bus, e.g., reporting bullying to a trusted adult (parent, teacher, principal or vice principal, support staff, police liaison officer) or by using the “Report Bullying Now” button on the school website. The BPIP should also reinforce that the adults who ride the bus, e.g., bus drivers and educational assistants, are required to report incidents of bullying to administration.

**THE BPIP SHOULD ALSO OUTLINE HOW THE SCHOOL RESPONDS TO BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL AND ON THE BUS BY:**

- Ensuring the safety of all involved
- Responding to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate
- Conducting a school-based investigation

Schools are required to provide support for those impacted as a result of an incident. This includes the person(s) who has been harmed, the person(s) who caused harm, and the person(s) who has witnessed harm.

**PLANS PUT IN PLACE FOR STUDENTS IMPACTED BY AN INCIDENT NEEDS TO INCLUDE SUPPORTS SUCH AS:**

- Furthering school-level support such as connection to a caring adult, and having that person check-in with the student on a regular basis
  - Implementing board-level supports such as social work or psychological services (with consent)
    - Preferential seating on the bus



# APPLYING MITIGATING, OTHER AND HUMAN RIGHTS FACTORS

**When implementing bias-free progressive discipline, schools must comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Education Act. Given that the bus is an extension to the school, this expectation also applies when addressing incidents on the bus.**

## HUMAN RIGHTS

The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on protected grounds and/or in a protected social area.

### PROTECTED GROUNDS ARE:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status (including single status)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)
- Record of offences (in employment only)
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation

### PROTECTED SOCIAL AREAS ARE:

- Accommodation (housing)
- Contracts
- Employment
- Goods, services (e.g., schools) and facilities
- Membership in unions, trade or professional associations



As outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, "it is public policy in Ontario to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. The provisions of the Code are aimed at creating a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person, so that each person feels a part of the community and feels able to contribute to the community." In addition, service providers, including schools, "have a legal duty to accommodate the Code-related needs of people who are adversely affected by a requirement, rule or standard". As a result, principals and vice principals must consider the provisions of the Code when implementing bias-free progressive discipline, this includes dealing with bus incidents.

### **MITIGATING AND OTHER FACTORS**

As stated in the Education Act, a principal or vice principal need to take into account mitigating and other factors when implementing bias-free progressive discipline in response to an incident at school or on the bus. Considering mitigating and other factors is an important step to help the principal or vice principal better understand the student's behaviour, and how to effectively address the behaviour.

#### **MITIGATING FACTORS INCLUDE:**

- The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour
- The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour
- The pupil's continuing presence in the school or on the bus does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person

#### **OTHER FACTORS INCLUDE:**

- The pupil's history
- Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil
- Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment
- How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education
- The age of the pupil
- In the case of a pupil for whom an Individual Education Plan (IEP) has been developed:
  - whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,
  - whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
  - whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct

# BIAS-FREE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS FOR THE BUS

The purpose of bias-free progressive discipline, is to support a shared vision and ensure a common practice that encourages positive behaviour and promotes healthy relationships,

Student engages in  
**MINOR VIOLATION**  
of School Board/  
DSTS expectations for  
safe, respectful and  
responsible conduct

Student engages in  
**MAJOR VIOLATION**  
of School Board/  
DSTS expectations for  
safe, respectful and  
responsible conduct

## 01 **FIRST violation** of Expectations for Conduct on the Bus

1. Bus driver warns the student.
2. Bus driver completes/submits the *Transportation Communication Report* (Bus Report) to the principal or vice principal within 48 hours
3. Principal or vice principal speak with student and complete the *Transportation Communication Report*. Copies are provided to bus driver, DSTS, parent (if appropriate), and the school
4. Strategic interventions MAY be considered, e.g., Preferential Seating/Seating Plan



growth and positive development among all students. This process involves all staff taking proactive, individualized and progressive measures when dealing with discipline. This process is presented in a step-by-step manner. However, it doesn't preclude the ability of staff to repeat a step, if for example, there has been a time-lag since the last incident, or to move directly to a serious consequence if the incident is significant, e.g., the students behaviour has put the safety of others in jeopardy.

## 02 SECOND violation of Expectations for Conduct on the Bus

1. Bus driver warns the student, completes the *Transportation Communication Report* within 48 hours
2. Bus driver completes/submits the *Transportation Communication Report* (Bus Report) to the principal or vice principal within 48 hours
3. Principal or vice principal speak with student and complete the *Transportation Communication Report*. Copies are provided to bus driver, DSTS, parent (if appropriate), and the school
4. Strategic interventions **MUST BE** applied to address inappropriate behaviour, e.g., Preferential Seating/Seating Plan
5. Parents are notified that any subsequent violations **MAY** result in the loss of privileges to ride the bus

## 03 THIRD violation of Expectations for Conduct on the Bus

1. Bus driver warns the student, completes the *Transportation Communication Report* within 48 hours
2. Bus driver completes/submits the *Transportation Communication Report* (Bus Report) to the principal or vice principal within 48 hours
3. Principal or vice principal speak with student and complete the *Transportation Communication Report*. Copies are provided to bus driver, DSTS, parent (if appropriate), and school
4. Principal or vice principal consults with the bus driver and DSTS about possible next steps, e.g., suspension from the bus, meeting with parents, EA support on the bus
5. Parents are notified that any subsequent violations **MAY** result in the loss of privileges for riding the bus

# SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS WHO RIDE THE BUS

## Student Safety Plan for Transportation SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS WHO RIDE THE BUS

The purpose of this resource is to promote the safety of students, school staff and DSTS staff on the bus

Student Safety Plan\* is created by

Principal or Vice Principal

Student Safety Plan\* is approved by

Special Education Superintendent or Designate

Student Safety Plan\* is shared with

DSTS

### ROLE OF THE BUS DRIVER IN COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOL STAFF

1. Be familiar with the details of the Student Safety Plan for students who ride the bus
2. Understand the environmental triggers identified in the Student Safety Plan that may cause issues
3. Implement appropriate interventions identified in the Student Safety Plan
4. Be familiar with appropriate responses and /or actions that should be taken to support students

\* Please use the board template for the student safety plan



## POSSIBLE TRIGGERS

- Unexpected or loud noises on the bus
- Changes in the type of bus or the bus route
- Change in staff, e.g., the bus driver or EA
- A delayed bus departure
- Interactions with other students
- Changes in routines at school or at home
- Changes to the bus seating plan
- Inclement weather

## SUGGESTED RESPONSES

- If an EA is assigned to the bus, he or she will take the lead
- Refer to the information in the Student Safety Plan for next steps
- Speak calmly, review the bus protocol, and then ask the student to sit in assigned seat
- If there is a high level of concern, pullover, and call DSTS. Identify the student and ask for assistance. If necessary, return to the school

## PREVENTION

### ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

- Have reinforcement or sensory items available, e.g., music played through headphones and/or comfort toys
- Strategic seating on the bus, e.g., a seating plan for the students
- Quiet setting when travelling on the bus, e.g., the use of noise cancelling headphones
- Speak calmly/quietly

# SELF-REGULATION: SUPPORTING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR ON THE BUS

Student behaviour can be viewed as a response to stressors that occur in five domains

**The following are descriptions of the domains:**

**Biological Domain** - Maintaining optimal alertness

**Emotional Domain** - Regulating feelings and moods

**Cognitive Domain** - Mentally processing different kinds of sensory information

**Social Domain** - Understanding social situations and cues

**Pro-social Domain** - Caring for others by demonstrating traits such as empathy and honesty

## SUPPORTING SELF REGULATION ON THE BUS

For each of the domains, there are strategies that can be used to support students while riding the bus.

### Biological Domain

**Some of the stressors in the Biological Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:**

- Illness
- Insufficient sleep
- The environment (too much/too little noise/light/temperature/visual stimulus)
- Food choices (skipping meals, fat/sugar/salt content)

**To support students' self-regulation in the Biological Domain while riding the bus, schools may:**

- Adjust the environment, e.g., assigned seating, the use of noise cancelling headphones and/or a fidget tools
- Encourage parents to ensure that their child has adequate sleep, is physically active and eats healthy meals

### Emotional Domain

**Some of the stressors in the Emotional Domain that may impact a student's behavior on the bus include:**

- A change in routine, e.g., a new bus driver
- A conflict with a friend, peer and/or a person in authority

**To support students' self-regulation in the Emotional Domain while riding the bus, schools may:**

- Create consistent structures and routines, e.g., an assigned seat on the bus
- Prepare students for any changes in routines
- Support the student when managing negative emotions
- Encourage parents to allow their child to take responsibility, when appropriate, and establish consistent and developmentally appropriate boundaries and expectations for their child

## Cognitive Domain

**Some of the stressors in the Cognitive Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:**

- Difficulty focusing due to a sensitivity to environmental factors, e.g., the bus is too loud
- A learning challenge, e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Depression or Anxiety Disorder
- Difficulty following multi-step instructions

**To support students' self-regulation in the Cognitive Domain while riding the bus, schools may:**

- Adjust the environment, e.g., assigned seating, the use of noise cancelling headphones and/or a fidget tool
- Provide positive feedback and reinforcement when students behave appropriately on the bus
- Offer clear structure and rules, and "chunk" expectations into simpler steps
- Encourage parents to support their child's use of positive self-talk, allow their child to take ownership for his or her decisions, and support their child in taking an active role in repairing mistakes and solving problems

## Social Domain

**Some of the stressors in the Social Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:**

- The inability to cooperate with others
- Dealing with unfamiliar social interactions
- A learning challenge, e.g., ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Depression or Anxiety Disorder

**To support students' self-regulation in the Social Domain while riding the bus, schools may:**

- Embed social and emotional learning into daily routines, including riding the bus
- Foster and model healthy and meaningful relationships
- Support students in identifying their emotions, and promote positive emotional responses
- Encourage parents to discuss their child's feelings and possible reasons for those feelings, provide opportunities for their child to engage in positive social interactions with others, and support a healthy diet, adequate sleep and exercise with their child

## Pro-Social Domain

**Some of the stressors in the Pro-Social Domain that may impact a student's behaviour on the bus include:**

- The stage of development of empathy
- The use of punishment rather than the use of bias-free progressive discipline
- Differing messages on maintaining safe, inclusive and caring environments, e.g., condoning or ignoring bullying behaviours

**To support students' self-regulation in the Pro-Social Domain while riding the bus, schools may:**

- Use of bias-free progressive discipline and Restorative Practices for incidents that occur on the bus
- Incorporate bullying prevention and interventions strategies that are applicable to the bus
- Encourage empathy, active listening, leadership and the importance of helping one another
- Encourage parents to promote kindness and empathetic behaviour towards others with their child, and help their child to consider the feelings and needs of both self and others and to use personal strengths to help others

# CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION OF AN INCIDENT ON THE BUS

**An investigation is conducted by the principal or vice principal when there has been a violation of the School Code of Conduct. This includes when a student engages in behaviour that impacts negatively on the school climate, e.g., inappropriate behaviour on the bus.**



## WHEN CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION OF AN INCIDENT ON THE BUS, A PRINCIPAL OR VICE PRINCIPAL SHOULD:

- read the *Transportation Communication Report* to better understand what happened on the bus
- if necessary speak to the bus driver, interview witnesses, and the student(s) involved in the incident
- ensure that the investigation process is fair, thorough and complete
- ensure neutrality and procedural fairness
- gather and document the facts, not opinions
- be unbiased. Since many marginalized families have experienced negative interactions with schools, it is important to listen to, and acknowledge the student's and his or her parents' feelings and concerns
- be flexible, especially when presented with new information that impacts on the original decision
- use bias-free progressive discipline to focus on corrective measures, not punitive
- consider Mitigating Factors, Other Factors and Human Rights Factors
- Consult Superintendent or designate, and/or other support personnel, when necessary
- follow Board and Ministry legislation, including policies, regulations, procedures and protocols
- involve the police regarding possible criminal activity (refer to the School Board/ Police Protocol)
- communicate the outcome and the application of bias-free progressive discipline, using the *Transportation Communication Report*, to the student(s), parents and appropriate school and DSTS staff while maintaining the required confidentiality



# ENGAGING PARENTS WHEN CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE BUS

**In order to help parents, understand and support bus safety and bias-free progressive discipline, staff should engage parents in the following ways:**

- Foster positive relationships with parents
- Create a school learning environment in which parents are welcomed, respected and valued as partners in their child's education and safety
- Promote a positive school climate by ensuring safety, inclusion and respect for all school and community members
- Be informed of School Board and DSTS policy regarding relevant issues that pertain to a parent's concern, e.g., if a parent has a question about safety procedures for the bus, the principal or vice principal can refer him or her to board policies listed on the board website
- Use Board resources that will help resolve issues with parents; both human and material resources, e.g., connecting with the Superintendent responsible for Safe Schools or designate when a parent is concerned about bullying that is occurring on the bus
- Reflect on your Board's Equity and Diversity Strategic Plan
- Understand the school community, e.g., socio-economic status, race, religion, etc
- Be aware of how culture and the diversity of your school community can potentially impact school/parent relations. Demonstrate respect, care and personal regard for parents
- Manage situations that occur on the bus in a timely manner; and don't "let things go" or "over-react" to any situation
- Have meaningful interactions with parents that demonstrates that you are interested in their concerns and questions. Be an empathetic, active listener
- Ensure that you are visible and accessible, and that you fully communicate expectations for bus safety to students and parents
- Communicate clearly and frequently the expectations for bus safety via phone conversations, email, social media, e.g., Twitter, school website, etc.
- Ensure that parents know that your goal is to help every child follow the expectations in the School Code of Conduct as it pertains to bus safety. Refer to the School's Code of Conduct, and let parents know that it applies to "all stakeholders", including parents

# INFORMING PARENTS ABOUT EXPECTATIONS FOR BUS SAFETY

It is important that parents work collaboratively to support the expectations outlined in the School Code of Conduct, including bus safety and acceptable behaviour of students on the bus. Principals or vice principal shall inform parents about their responsibility to follow the School Code of Conduct and expectations outlined by DSTS. Parents should be encouraged to support and reinforce the safety/behaviour expectations that apply to their children.

## PARENTS

- are responsible for their children's safety and conduct prior to boarding the bus and after disembarking the bus, this includes while waiting at the bus stop
- shall advise and explain to their children the rules of bus safety and for appropriate behaviour as identified in the School Code of Conduct

## STUDENTS AND PARENTS AT BUS PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF POINTS

**Students and parents are expected to conduct themselves in the following manner at bus pick-up and drop-off points:**

- Be at your bus stop at least five minutes prior to the schedule time. Students must be at the bus stop waiting for the bus to arrive. Do not wait in a vehicle. If the bus is departing, do not attempt to stop the bus
- Stand back from the road when you see the bus coming and wait for the bus to come to a complete stop
- Conduct yourself in an appropriate, safe manner prior to the arrival of the bus, e.g., be respectful of community members, and of the property of others
- Follow safety procedures when crossing the roadway, and when students are loading and unloading the bus
- Travel to school and return home on the assigned bus. Board and disembark at the assigned bus stop location
- Enter the bus in single file, do not push and take your seat as quickly as possible
- Kindergarten students are to remain with their parents at the bus stop and **MUST** be met by a parent when dropped off





***To encourage and support the safe operation of the bus, drivers will report all incidents to the student's principal or vice principal.***

### **EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS WHILE ON THE BUS**

- Listen to the bus driver; he or she is in control of the bus
- Co-operate with the bus driver when asked to do so
- Try to speak quietly. Excessive noise, loud singing and shouting can be a distraction to the bus driver and to the safe operation of the bus
- Remain seated at all times. Sit facing forward until the vehicle comes to a stop. Students who do not sit properly in the seats may be seriously injured
- Keep belongings, including backpacks stowed under the seat or on your lap. Do not place items in the aisle. It is important to keep the aisles clear to prevent tripping, and to allow for a safe evacuation of the bus if required
- Do not bring large/bulky items on the bus, e.g., sports equipment
- Do not engage in the use of abusive language, profanity, yelling, throwing items (inside and out of the bus), smoking, fighting or any other activity that may interfere in the safe operation of the vehicle and/or endanger the safety of others
- Do not engage in any activity that may interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle
- No eating or drinking. This may pose a choking hazard or it may impact on the safety of a student with an allergy
- Keep arms, legs and head inside the vehicle at all times
- Do not attempt to distract other vehicles on the road
- Do not willfully damage the bus in any way. Students and/or their parents will be responsible for restitution
- Unsafe behaviour may result in loss of bus privileges

# SUPPORTING RESOURCES FOR BUS BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

Note: Resources specific to the **DSTS** is in black, **DDSB** are indicated in yellow, and to the **DCDSB** in red.

## DSTS

- **Joint Board Transportation Policy**
- **Policy, Regulation and Procedure 3545: Durham Transportation Policy**
- **Procedure 3090: Bus Safety Procedures**
- **PO 429-Student Transportation**

## RESOURCES ON THE DSTS WEBSITE [www.dsts.on.ca](http://www.dsts.on.ca)

- **Bus Information for Students**
- **Bus Information for Parents**
- **Code of Conduct for Buses**
- **Transportation Communication Report**

## SAFE SCHOOLS

### DDSB

- **Policy and Procedure 4255: Security and Safety**
- **Policy, Regulation and Procedure 5500: Code of Conduct and Discipline for Students**
- **Policy, Regulation and Procedure 5148: Positive School Climate**
- **Procedure 3041: Police School Board Protocol**

### DCDSB

- **Student Conduct and Safety PO610/AP610-1**
- **Student Discipline PO611/AP611-1**
- **Equity and Inclusive Education AP216-1**
- **Police/School Board Protocol (2016)**
- **Bullying Prevention - PO612/AP612-1**
- **Busing Accident AP 429-2**

## RESOURCES ON THE SAFE SCHOOLS PORTAL

### DDSB

- **Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)**
- **Safe Schools Safety Plan**
- **Progressive Discipline: A Bias-Free Approach**
- **Restorative Practice: Healthy Relationships for Living and Learning**

### DCDSB

- **Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)**
- **Safe School Incident Reporting Module**
- **C-TAIP Protocol**
- **Progressive Discipline Poster**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

DDSB

- [Procedure 3050: 911 Emergency Response Guidelines](#)
- [Procedure 4146: Workplace Violence Management Program](#)

DCDSB

- [Workplace Violence PO324/AP324-1](#)

## RESOURCES ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PORTAL

DDSB

- [Workplace Violence Policy](#)
- [Workplace Violence Information Pamphlet](#)

DCDSB

- [Critical Incident Response Handbook](#)

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

DDSB

- [Procedure 5127: Management Process for Risk-of-Injury \(Ri\) Behaviours](#)

## RESOURCES ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PORTAL

DDSB

- [Behaviour Safety Plan](#)
- [Student Brief](#)
- [Transportation Plan](#)

DCDSB

- [Student Safety Plan](#)
- [Transportation Plan](#)
- [Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario](#)

## EQUITY

DDSB

- [Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework](#)

DCDSB

- [Together for All – Equity and Inclusive Education Action Plan 2017-2020](#)



DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
Catholic Education: Learning and Living in Faith

# BUS BEHAVIOUR & DISCIPLINE

