

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) has repeatedly determined that school buses are the safest mode of transportation to and from school, with fewer fatalities than children riding in cars, on bikes, or walking. Most school bus fatalities occur when children are outside the bus, and 75% of these fatalities involve children under the age of nine. Below are some important SLPS Policies, please review to ensure we are keeping our students safe on and off the school bus.

Each of our School Buses are equipped with the following:

- 2-way radios for communication with dispatch
- 3-point seatbelts
- Integrated car seats
- 6-8 high definition security cameras
- GPS tracking software
- Map Navigation
- A/C units
- Fire Extinguishers
- Rear-View backup camera (new buses)



## **GENERAL SCHOOL BUS POLICIES**

- ❖ Students are granted only one bus and bus stop for both the morning and afternoon.
- ❖ We are unable to provide service to multiple stops for a student, whether for daycare, custody issues, etc. We serve a limited number of non-profit daycares that can become your child's established stop.
- ❖ We require our Bus Drivers to assign seats for all students. We expect our riders to sit in their assigned seats at all times.
- ❖ Remove Drawstrings - Clothing your children with drawstrings may not always be safe. Drawstrings can catch in playground equipment, fences, and school bus doors. Remove, shorten or replace drawstrings with another kind of fastener. In accordance with federal voluntary recalls, St. Lucie Public Schools has retrofitted all school and activity bus handrails that will not snag children's clothing.

## **BUS RULES FOR PARENTS**

The safety of our children is the number one priority of the SLPS Transportation Department. Today's children contend with morning rush hour traffic, few sidewalks, and motorists with their minds elsewhere and their phones in their hands. Parents are the frontline protectors of their children. Help us teach our children school bus and bus stop safety and please support the driver's authority in enforcing school bus safety and behavior rules.

- ❖ Parents are encouraged to walk with or transport their children to and from bus stops.
- ❖ Parents must ensure that their children arrive at the bus stop in the morning at least ten minutes prior to pick up time.
- ❖ Parents are responsible for their children's safety and well-being on the way to and from the bus stops and while at the bus stops.
- ❖ Parents are responsible for the proper conduct of their children on the way and from and while at the bus stops.
- ❖ Parents are responsible for the conduct of their children, along with district personnel while the children are aboard the bus.
- ❖ Parents are expected to cooperate with district personnel regarding the safe and effective transport of their children.
- ❖ Parents are encouraged to contact the school or the transportation department when they observe unsafe conditions.
- ❖ Every child should have a responsible parent or designated adult to supervise bus stop safety

## **BUS RULES FOR STUDENTS**

- ❖ Classroom conduct is to be observed.
- ❖ Students must sit in their assigned seats and belts must be worn at all times when the bus is in motion. Cooperate and refrain from unnecessary conversation with the driver while the bus is in motion.
- ❖ Students must ride their assigned bus and each student must board and depart at a designated bus stop. Students must present a written request from the parent/guardian, receive approval from, the Principal/Designee for any changes.
- ❖ Students are requested to be at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before scheduled pick-up as the bus will not wait beyond the scheduled pick-up time.
- ❖ Students will stand off the roadway and exhibit appropriate behavior while waiting for the bus.
- ❖ Students will board, depart and cross the roadway as per instructions from the bus driver.
- ❖ No portions of the body are permitted outside bus windows.
- ❖ Reptiles, bugs, animals or marine life (dead or alive) are not permitted on the bus.
- ❖ Smoking, use of tobacco products or other mood modifying substances is strictly prohibited.
- ❖ Objects that impair the driver's vision, impact safety or seating capacity are prohibited on the school bus. (such as band instruments, school projects or special equipment)
- ❖ Inappropriate gestures, obscenities, vulgarity or profanity will not be permitted.
- ❖ Eating, drinking or chewing gum is not permitted on the bus.
- ❖ Students shall not throw any item in/out of the bus, shout, whistle or gesture from the window.
- ❖ Students who are responsible for vandalism will be required to make restitution.
- ❖ Students must remain absolutely quiet at railroad crossings and when the dome lights are on
- ❖ Excessive noise on the school bus is prohibited at all times.
- ❖ Any behavior that adversely affects the safety or well-being of others is prohibited.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR BAND INSTRUMENTS ON SCHOOL BUSES**

Large music instruments are not to be transported on school buses.

Listed below are some of the instruments that are considered too large to be allowed on buses:

- ❖ Brass Horns (Tubas and Sousaphones)
- ❖ French Horns
- ❖ Baritone Saxophones
- ❖ Trombones
- ❖ Contra-Bass Clarinets
- ❖ Contra-Bassoons
- ❖ Drums
- ❖ Timpani

The largest instrument allowed on a school bus is an alto saxophone. A typical alto case is 25 inches long, 11 inches high and 7 inches wide.

For Field Trips, the Band Director will arrange for a truck from the Warehouse Department or make other arrangements for transporting larger instruments.

Smaller instruments that are allowed to be carried on the school bus must be kept inside the instrument case at all times and not allowed to be played on the bus at any time.

Bus drivers, band students and Band Directors, must be aware that the smaller instruments which are allowed on school buses should be placed as follows:

1. in the lap of the student who plays the instrument
2. under the seat where the student sits
3. another place the bus driver designates

In the event of collision or sudden slamming of brakes, any loose objects can become missiles and projectiles. Therefore, only those items small enough to be secured as described are allowed on school buses.

## **REPORTING UNSAFE BUS BEHAVIOR**

When parents are negligent in this area, the Transportation Department depends on the community and its citizens to report safety concerns such as:

- ❖ Playing or sitting in the street
- ❖ Misbehavior or vandalism
- ❖ Causing neighborhood disturbances
- ❖ New construction beginning in the area of the stop
- ❖ Unsafe drivers in the area of the stop
- ❖ Illicit or illegal activities
- ❖ Unattached adults lingering near the area of the stop
- ❖ Any concern related to the safety of students

Citizens may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if a crime is being committed or contact [busconcerns@stlucieschools.org](mailto:busconcerns@stlucieschools.org) to assist in keeping all children safe at school bus stops.

## **I need to register my child for SLC School (1<sup>st</sup> time student in this county)...**

You will need to contact Student Assignment at 772-429-3930. The Main Student Assignment Office is located at the district office at 9461 Brandywine Lane ~ Port St. Lucie, FL 34986.

## **What time should we be at the bus stop...**

All buses have a 10-minute window around schedule stop times.

*(Example: If the bus stop is scheduled at 3:00pm, the bus can arrive anywhere from 2:50pm-3:10pm)*

Buses will not turn around if the stop was made inside the window of time. We use GPS tracking to confirm this.

## **I want to change my bus route...**

We are unable to change routes. Children are assigned a bus based on the address the school has on file. You can update your address with the student's school or Student Assignment.

## **My child's bus stop is too far to walk...**

We do our best to get the bus stops as close as we can. Our goal is to keep them .5 to 3 quarters of a mile. State Law states the stops cannot be more than 1.5 miles from the home. The bus stop that has been assigned is always the closest we have for your child.

## **I want a different/closer community stop...**

Community Stops are designed to bring as many students to one stop as possible, therefore they are not designed for walking. We are unable to move/change/add Community Stops.

## **Do I need an Alternate Address Form or Pay Ride?**

**Alternate Address:** If you want to have your child picked up from a different stop than the address listed on file. This will be from the same stop in am/pm. The bus stop must already exist; we will not create a new stop. (Example: child lives at home but needs a daily bus back and forth to grandma's house, baby sitter's house, etc.)

**Pay Ride:** If you want a different stop in the am and a different stop in the pm or an extra stop. The bus stop must be in the same zone and there must be an available seat on the bus. This allows you to have 2 different buses/stops assigned for a fee. The cost for this option is \$100 for the semester or \$200 for the year. (Example: pick up at moms in AM, drop off at dads in PM)

## **Why is the bus late?**

Buses tend to run late the first week or two of school as students are still being added and routes continue to change. We apologize for the bus being late and thank you for your patience as students and schools are adjusting to the new year. After week 2 of school, automated calls will be sent out to advise if your child's bus is running behind.

## **I need an after school bus...**

We only assign busing for after school programs or club based programs when they send us a list of students that need busing. Our routers will receive the info and assign buses at that time. We cannot assign a bus for after care until we receive notification from the after-school program.

## **Why do I have to pick up my child at the compound?**

District policy states that any child in KG, Pre-K or 1<sup>st</sup> grade cannot get off the bus unless the parent/guardian is at the stop to pick them up. If you are not at the bus stop in time to pick up your child, the bus driver will keep the child on board and bring them into the compound. The policy is strictly enforced for the protection and safety of children and no exceptions are made for this.