

Plains Independent School District

Bus Driver/Transportation Policies 2006-2007

James Haynes, Superintendent
Mike Taylor, Transportation Supervisor

Drivers should remember that while driving a Plains ISD bus you are the most visible representative of Plains ISD. Your first responsibility is to take utmost care to keep our district's most precious possession, our children, safe. Your driving habits should reflect this awesome responsibility. All Safety rules for drivers will be strictly enforced.

**** All school district employees should review the following policies in the bus driver handbook:

Regulations for Activity Trips	Pgs. 8-10
Cowboy Bus Guidelines	Pg. 11
Use of Car Pool Vehicles	Pg. 13

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**Plains Independent School District
Bus Routes 2005-2006**

Bus #	Driver/Drivers	AM/PM	Radio #
9	Charles Cain Cheryl McKinzie	AM PM	9
10	Steve Alldredge	AM/PM	10
12	Todd Davis Brad Friesen	AM PM	12
13	Kevin Bartley Judy Justus	AM PM	13
14 Special Ed	Nancy Ponce	AM/PM	14

There is a rider report that must be filled out monthly and returned to the Transportation Supervisor (Mike Taylor). This report should be filed in a timely manner.

Plains Independent School District Transportation Policies

- I. Do not abuse school buses in any manner.
- II. **Do not speed. Route bus speed should be 50 M.P.H. on the highway.** Drive at the appropriate speed for the road and weather conditions. Delivering students to school and home safely is more important than being on time. See page 5 for regulations concerning speed limits on the different types of roadways. **The use of a cell phone by the driver while the bus is in motion is strictly prohibited.**
- III. The driver will keep his/her bus interior clean at all times.
- IV. The driver will be responsible for pre and post trip inspections, which will include safety equipment such as first aid kits, reflectors, and body fluid clean-up kits.
- V. Report any bus problem to Mike Taylor or James Haynes.
- VI. The bus should not be late to pick up students unless allowances are being made for weather or road conditions.
- VII. Bus routes should be driven the same direction morning and afternoon. The only exception to this rule will be to allow less time on the bus for handicapped students.
- VIII. Drivers are required to verbally check out and check in over the radio when leaving and returning from routes or activity trips.
- IX. All buses should arrive at school between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m.
- X. Bus drivers will complete all state and local reports as requested and should return those reports to Mike Taylor.
- XI. Drivers may be required to take a sobriety and/or drug test at any time as requested by their supervisor or mandated by DOT requirements.
- XII. Drivers will be sure that all necessary forms which are required for their employment and certification are completed and filed in the superintendent's office.
- XIII. The Superintendent's administrative assistant will be responsible for maintaining required driver records including:
 - A. Current MVR
 - B. Criminal History Check
 - C. Physical Examination Records
 - D. Bus Driving School Records
 - E. Proper Texas Driver License Verification

Route Bus Speed Limits for Different Types of Roads

- 1. U.S. and State Highways (example U.S. highway 380 or state highway 214), maximum speed limit in good weather 55 mph, speed adjusted downward for bad weather conditions**
- 2. Paved county roads (example C.R. 145) maximum speed limit is 50 mph, speed adjusted downward for bad weather conditions**
- 3. Gravel, dirt, and caliche roads maintained by the county maximum speed limit is 35 mph, speed adjusted downward for the following reasons:
 - a. weather conditions**
 - b. condition of the road regardless of the weather****
- 4. Gravel, dirt, and caliche roads that are privately maintained, maximum speed limit is 10 mph, speed adjusted downward for the following reasons:
 - a. Weather conditions**
 - b. Condition of the road regardless of the weather****
- 5. Your speed should always be adjusted downward for any road hazard or extremely rough areas. Remember school buses have extremely stiff suspensions and will bounce to the point that the wheels/tires may leave the ground if a rough area is hit at an excessive speed. Do not allow this to happen.**

These maximum speeds are given to you for several reasons:

- 1. Student Safety; Excessive speed is dangerous for you and your passengers.**
- 2. The only occasion in school related activities that you can be held personally liable is for your actions as the driver of a school district vehicle. This means that you could be sued personally for accidents that occur while you are driving a school bus or other school vehicle. This means you could lose your personal money or property should a judgment be levied against you. There are no other areas of school work in which this can happen.**
- 3. We are in and will continue to be in a tight budgeting situation. Excessive speed causes premature equipment failure and subjecting school buses to excessive speed on rough roads further increases the chances of equipment failure. We don't have the money to replace buses. We must make them last as long as possible.**
- 4. If you are not following these speed limit guidelines, you should begin to do so and adjust the time that you leave so that the students' arrival at school remains the same.**

**Regulations Concerning Students
Riding School Buses
On Regular Routes**

The regulations listed below are in accordance with provisions of Section 105 of the Uniform Act Regulating Traffic on Texas Highways and have been adopted by the State Department of Education. Each school is to enforce these regulations:

Route Trips

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students must obey the driver promptly and fully.
2. Students should be courteous to other students and bus driver.
3. Students must never stand in the roadway while waiting for the bus. They shall wait a sufficient distance from the pavement to allow room for the bus to pull off the pavement onto the shoulder.
4. Students must be on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
5. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited. The driver needs to give his/her full attention to the operating of the bus.
6. Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct is to be observed.
7. Pupils must not throw waste paper or other rubbish on the floor of the bus.
8. Throwing of anything from the bus is strictly prohibited.
9. Students must not, at any time, extend their arms or heads out of the bus windows.
10. Students must not try to get on or off the bus or move about within the bus while it is in motion.
11. When exiting the bus, students must follow the directions of the driver.

These regulations should be given to the students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

Specific Rules

Bus Driver

1. The driver shall maintain discipline on the bus at all times, and shall report daily any violation or misconduct by the pupils to the school principal.
2. Drivers are not to leave their buses unattended unless it is absolutely necessary. A great number of problems arise while the driver is absent from his/her bus.
3. A student should never be put off the bus to walk home. If necessary to emphasize the disciplinary action, the principal and the superintendent may take away the student's privilege to ride the bus. In serious cases a meeting with the student's parents, driver, principal, and possibly the superintendent will be necessary.
4. Never bring a student to the principal having already promised him/her a spanking or removal of bus privileges. When you bring a student to the principal, the principal will decide on the corrective measures. It is not your job to act as the disciplinarian.
5. Caring for the safety of students is a tremendous responsibility and driving a school bus requires the use of sound judgment.

Students

Following are some items, which are specifically prohibited, and the violator should be referred to the principal for conference and corrective action.

1. Committing an act of defiance against any driver, either in action or language.
2. Fighting, profanity, or obscenity.
3. Stealing or gambling.
4. Willfully defacing, damaging, or destroying public school property.
5. Possessing or using tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or any narcotic or dangerous drugs on the school bus.
6. Possessing, igniting, or exploding any article of fireworks on or around the school bus.

Other Regulations

1. Occasionally there will be a need for non-bus students to ride a school bus. In order that a non-bus student may ride the bus it will be necessary for that student to secure permission from his/her school principal.
2. Bus students are required to board their bus in the bus-loading zone at their school. Students will not be allowed to get off the bus at other school loading areas.
3. Parents with a problem or question about any regulation, route, or procedures concerning school transportation should contact Mike Taylor or James Haynes at 806-456-7401.

Regulations for Activity Trips

It is our desire that an activity trip be a pleasant experience for pupils, sponsors, and bus drivers. In order for this to be possible, certain regulations shall be observed by all parties. These minimum rules are listed for each group.

No vehicle will be assigned without a request made through the superintendent's office. If a request is not received or is received with extremely short notice, a vehicle may not be assigned.

A. **Bus Drivers**

1. A driver should have the vehicle at the designated loading area at **least thirty minutes** before departure time.
2. The vehicle should be clean and in good condition.
3. The driver is responsible for driving the vehicle in a safe manner to any place or places that the sponsor may direct. **Yellow Activity Buses can be driven at a maximum speed of 65 mph (If DOT inspected, if not DOT inspected the maximum speed is 55 mph) or the posted speed limit if it is less than 65 mph. The transit style activity buses can be driven at a maximum speed of 70 mph. or the posted speed limit if it is less than 70 mph. Students riding in activity buses shall be required to wear seatbelts, if equipped.**
4. **The use of a cell phone by the driver while the bus is in motion is strictly forbidden.**
5. Upon arriving at the destination, the driver is not to leave to go eat or for coffee until he/she has checked with the sponsor to be sure that he/she is not needed at that particular time.
6. When traveling in convoy, each driver should maintain a distance of approximately 200 yards from the vehicle in front. A driver is responsible for maintaining a visual contact with the vehicle behind. At night it will be necessary to check the lights of the following vehicle frequently.
7. When traveling in a convoy; should one vehicle stop all vehicles will stop. (For explanation see James Haynes)
8. Activity buses should not be used to transport small groups of students in large cities if another smaller vehicle is available. (For explanation see James Haynes)
9. **The conduct of the pupils is the responsibility of the sponsor and the driving is the responsibility of the driver.** In the event that pupil conduct becomes unruly to the extent that it creates a hazardous driving condition, the driver shall request the sponsor to correct the situation. In

the event that the sponsor will not or cannot correct the situation, the driver may pull off the highway in a safe place until the conduct of the pupils becomes satisfactory. This is a last resort and should be used very sparingly and only if pupil conduct has gotten out of hand to the extent that it creates a dangerous driving situation. Extra loud talking, occasional changing of seats, and incidents of this nature are not sufficient cause for stopping the bus.

10. No tobacco, alcohol, or drug (other than a prescription drug) will be used or possessed by students or adults on the bus.

B. Sponsors and Coaches

1. **Sponsors and coaches are in charge of pupils and pupil behavior on the bus during activity trips.**
2. Sponsors or coaches are to see that pupils remain in their seats once the bus is in motion.
3. **Sponsors or coaches are to see that all trash, food wrappers and uneaten foods are removed from the bus and placed in dumpsters located behind the bus barn, before the bus is parked for the evening.**
4. Food and soft drinks may be consumed on the bus, but only with the approval of the sponsor, coach, or bus driver. It is the responsibility of the sponsor or coach to see that the remains are placed in the trashcan on the bus. The sponsor or coach is to inspect the bus after pupils have completed the trip to see that all trash has been disposed of on the bus.
5. Sponsors or coaches are responsible for seeing that student regulations are carried out.
6. It is a violation of state and federal law for any person to use or possess tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs on the bus.
7. Sponsors or coaches are to observe the conduct of students at all times. It is suggested that the sponsor position himself/herself in the middle or the back of the bus where he/she may more readily observe the students and their actions.
8. **Sponsors or coaches should make sure that movies shown on the buses are rated G or PG. PG13 movies should not be shown on the bus unless they have been approved by the administration. Absolutely no R rated movies will be allowed.**
9. **No handheld DVD players and movies allowed.**
10. **No electronic devices will be plugged into the auxiliary power supply of the bus.**

C. **Students**

1. Only pupils who are current students in good standing in the Plains Schools will be transported in school vehicles to activity events.
2. Students are expected to be at the departure point at least ten minutes before departure.
3. Once the bus is in motion, students are not to change seats or walk up and down the aisles and will be required to wear seatbelts in vehicles that are so equipped.
4. Food and soft drinks may be consumed on the bus with the approval of the sponsor or the bus driver. All trash and remnants are to be placed in the trashcans on the bus. **Sunflower seeds and ice cream are not to be consumed on any vehicle including activity buses. This includes the adult passengers as well.** All soft drinks must be in cans or some kind of non-breakable container. No glass bottles are to be brought on the bus.
5. Students on an activity trip are subject to school control just as much as if they were in the classroom. Students who violate school rules or refuse to obey a sponsor will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
6. All students attending an extra-curricular activity who ride the bus must return on the bus unless the parent personally makes special arrangements to pick up the student.
7. Parents requesting special arrangements must go directly to the sponsor or principal to get approval of any changes or alternate arrangements. The sponsor or principal will inform the driver of any changes in the ridership.
8. Throwing anything from the bus is strictly prohibited.

It is hoped that all persons involved in school activity trips will conscientiously observe the above rules in order that each trip taken by Plains I.S.D. students may be an enjoyable experience. Violations of the above rules by drivers, sponsors, or students should be reported to the principal or to the superintendent.

Cowboy Bus Guidelines and Procedures

While activity bus procedures apply to yellow buses as well as the Cowboy buses, please make sure the following items are covered when riding one of the Cowboy buses.

A. Bus Drivers

1. All safety procedures should be followed just as on the yellow bus activity trips. **The speed limit for a Cowboy bus is whatever speed is posted on the highway. The use of a cell phone by the driver while the bus is in motion is strictly forbidden.**
2. When traveling in a convoy, each driver should maintain a distance of approximately 200 yards from the vehicle in front.

B. Sponsors and Coaches

1. Sponsors and coaches should make sure that movies shown on the buses are rated G or PG. PG13 movies should not be shown on the bus unless they have been approved by the administration. Under no circumstances will an R-rated movie be shown on the bus.
2. No handheld DVD players will be allowed on any bus.

C. Students

1. Students are responsible for keeping the bus clean by placing all trash items in the trashcans located on the bus and cleaning up any spills they have.
2. Certain food items will never be allowed on any school bus or activity bus. **These items are not allowed for students, coaches or sponsors. The items are: sunflower seeds, ice cream, or any drink in a glass container.**

Being able to have the special Cowboy Activity Buses is a privilege. We should all be willing to take special care of these buses. People involved when using any bus or other vehicle in our fleet can help keep the cost down for operating them by following all the rules as outlined in this handbook.

Drivers need to drive safely and pay attention to the mechanical workings of the vehicles.

Coaches and sponsors need to support our safety effort by keeping students under control and making sure the buses are left clean after a trip.

Students should cooperate with the sponsors, follow the rules, and help with the cleanliness of the bus.

TIPS ON WAYS TO MAINTAIN STUDENT DISCIPLINE

1. A bus driver should be aware of the fact that he/she is working for an educational institution whose job is training the minds of students. Too frequently the driver expects his passengers to be a finished product with adult attitudes. When the students have attained such a status, they likely will not be riding on a school bus.
2. A driver should understand child psychology sufficiently well so that he will know that issuing an order does not complete the teaching process. An order must be patiently and constantly repeated.
3. Learn the students' names quickly and pronounce each student's name correctly. No one likes to hear his/her name mispronounced.
4. Be punctual and stay with your time schedule. Drivers take a dim view of tardy students; they are expected to be on time. Are you setting a good example?
5. Reprimand a student in private but praise him/her in front of the other students.
6. Never discipline for an inappropriate behavior one time and ignore the behavior the next time.
7. Be fair; it isn't punishment but injustice that makes a child rebel against you.
8. Be friendly; always show an interest in what students are doing.
9. Do not judge misconduct by how it annoys you.
10. Remember that a sense of humor is extremely valuable.
11. Remember that your attitude toward a student will reflect on that student's attitude toward you. Always avoid personality conflicts or "getting down on a student".
12. Read and study the Texas School Bus Driver Training Course Driver's Handbook. Pay special attention to the areas entitled: "Desirable Driver Characteristics", "The Driver and the Students", "The Driver and the Parents", and "The Driver and the Community".

Absences and Substitutes

All bus drivers who are absent must complete an absence from duty report. The absence from duty report will be at your time card station during the week after the absence occurs. You must sign and return the report to Mike Taylor as soon as possible. Regular full-time drivers annually earn 10 trips sick leave. Half-time drivers receive five trips sick leave annually.

Substitute bus drivers are to be secured by Mike Taylor from a list approved by James Haynes.

Time Cards and Payment for Routes and Activities

Time cards should be filled out at the time of a bus route or activity trip. Trips not documented on a time card will not be paid. Filling out route trips a week in advance is unacceptable. Coaches do not get paid for driving student athletes to their activities. Coaches who drive for other activities will be paid.

Use of Car Pool Vehicles

Vehicles are provided for employees use for school business. School business may consist of attendance or transportation of students to extra-curricular events or other school events. Adults may need vehicles for transportation to conventions or for professional development training.

No vehicle will be assigned without a request made through the superintendent's office. If a request is not received or is received with extremely short notice, a vehicle may not be assigned.

School vehicles should be operated in a safe manner following all traffic safety rules. **Any person driving a school district vehicle should adhere to the posted speed limit. Any traffic violation that is received while driving a school district vehicle is the responsibility of the driver and must be paid for by the driver.**

Upon returning the vehicles to the district, all trash should be removed from the vehicle and deposited in the trash dumpster behind the bus barn.

Any mechanical problems with the vehicles should be reported to the Transportation Supervisor or the Superintendent.