

## 2021-2022 Rider Safety Handbook

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Lufkin Independent School District provides bus transportation to and from school as a **courtesy service** for eligible students residing in the District. The State of Texas prescribes the conditions governing school bus operations and funds the service by allotting the District a given amount for eligible students transported. As an independent school district, we determine other operational restrictive measures on how transportation is governed and regulated. Transportation rules and guidelines are herein outlined in this handbook for your information. Please review this document thoroughly.

**Important!** Any time a student rides a LISD school bus for any reason, athletics, home to school, boys and girls club, my growing place, field trips, etc. these rules listed within this document applies. Disciplinary action will be taken for any violation up to loss of riding privileges. This document is available at our transportation office and is posted online at [www.lufkinisd.org](http://www.lufkinisd.org) under the transportation tab. There are English and Spanish versions available.

### **Regular Education Student Eligibility:**

**Home to school** transportation is available for students who **live two or more miles from their assigned campus**. The distance a student lives from his or her assigned campus is determined by measuring from the curb at the front of the school to the curb in front of the home using the closest paved street. **Address eligibility is continually audited year around. When an address is found to be ineligible, notification will be made as soon as possible with a grace period allowed for parents to locate an alternate mode of transportation.**

**Parents/Guardians:** The Lufkin Independent School District is pleased to provide transportation for its eligible students and request your assistance in helping us to maintain a **safe** and **efficient** operation. We ask for your cooperation with school personnel in developing proper behavior patterns for those students who ride LISD school buses. If you ever have any concerns about school bus safety, you are encouraged to call the Lufkin I.S.D. Transportation Office at (936) 634-6516. **Please be specific with your concern and understand we are here to help. Any use of profanity or threatening communication will be viewed as inappropriate and the call will be discontinued if you are not able to refrain from such behaviors. Employee and student harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. The transportation building is a school facility and anyone who enters and violates the safety rights of employees and students of the district by making physical threats or displaying disruptive behavior will be removed and subjected to criminal prosecution.**

**Please Note: Never attempt to board a school bus to address the driver or a student. You are not authorized to board the school bus for any reason. This is a violation of the students and employee's safety rights. If there is an issue, contact the department office and we will assist you.**

### **Requirements for Bus Service:**

1. Must meet the two or more-mile criteria from assigned school campus.
2. Must be a parent or guardian of the student for service.
3. Any address or phone number changes during the school year must be completed at the school of student attendance first, then call the transportation department at (634-6516) during the following times: **9:00am to 11:45am or after 5:00pm. These hours are specifically scheduled so they do not interfere with bussing operations. Your cooperation and understanding are appreciated.**

### **Prohibited Items:**

1. Any object (musical instrument, shop project, etc.) too large to be carried by student on to the school bus. Parent must provide transportation. For the object to be allowed, the object must:
  - be able to be placed in the student's lap and not take the place of a student seat.
  - not exceed the height of the seat, and
  - not obstruct the view of the driver.
2. Live animals or insects.
3. Any device or item that distracts the driver or disrupts transportation and/or creates an unsafe environment.
4. No skateboards or athletic equipment. Soccer balls, footballs must be placed in backpacks. They are not permitted otherwise.
5. No weapons or items that could be used to cause physical harm or compromise student or employee safety. Pencils, pens, scissors **must** remain in student's backpack.
6. No illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.

### **Student Conduct/Safety Rules:**

1. Follow and respect conduct rules as in the classroom.
2. Be Courteous. **NO** profane language or any language that is sexual or threatening.
3. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
4. Keep the bus clean. No trash or littering.
5. Cooperate and follow directions of the Driver and Monitor.
6. Do not use or possess tobacco products. No electronic cigarettes or vapor products. No matches or lighters.
7. Do not be destructive of LISD property. Parents/students will be responsible for payment of damages and riding privileges will be suspended until payment has been received.
8. Stay in your assigned seat and clear of the aisle. Never stand or jump to another seat while the bus is in motion. This action is very dangerous and **It is against the law!**
9. Keep head, hands, feet inside the bus. Keep your hands to yourself. This means you do not have the right to place your hands on anyone.
10. No **screaming** or **distracting noises**. Keep noise levels to a minimum, drivers need to focus on the road.
11. No throwing of **any** objects on the school bus.

12. Cell phones/electronics are permitted for music or game play with the use of ear plugs/buds or on silent if students do not have hearing devices. **In case of an emergency, students must get approval from the bus driver before being permitted to make a call.** We expect students to use good judgement when using these devices. This means you cannot talk on your phone whenever you please. We strongly discourage the sharing of devices between students, which can lead to altercations. **NO inappropriate content sites(pornography) or music play with profanity or inappropriate content of a violent or sexual nature.**
13. Hoodies must be removed before entering the bus and may not be worn while on the bus.
14. No blankets are permitted on the bus. Jackets must be worn or placed in backpacks.
15. **Video auditing** occurs periodically on **every** LISD school bus. If a violation is recorded the student/students may be subjected to disciplinary action up to removal from the school bus regardless of the date of occurrence.
16. Only board the school bus you are assigned, no exceptions. Never attempt to board anywhere other than your designated stop. Never attempt to get off anywhere other than your designated stop. This is a serious safety violation.
17. **Males and females are not permitted to sit together.**

**Please Note:** Other punishable violations include; bullying, fighting, horseplay, disrespect to LISD Transportation Staff or any other behavior that compromises the safety of students or staff members on board the school bus. In conjunction with the student rider safety handbook, students will also be held accountable on school board policy, dress code, and the student code of conduct.

### **Discipline:**

Students failing to obey **safety** procedures and conduct rules will be subjected to progressive discipline set forth by Transportation Administration. The driver/monitor will remind the student of the infraction and ask for the student to obey safety and conduct rules. We will exhaust every effort to correct poor behavior patterns from students, but if there is non-compliance disciplinary action will be taken. Parents will be notified by phone of any suspension periods. If we are unable to contact the parent, suspension periods will still be enforced. We will document every attempt to reach the parent (time and date). We will leave voice mails when and if available. It is your responsibility to have working numbers listed in the school system so you can be reached concerning your child.

### **Disciplinary Steps all grade levels:**

1st Referral	3 Day Suspension
2nd Referral	5 Day Suspension
3rd Referral	10 Day Suspension
4th Referral	15 Day Suspensions
<b><u>5th Referral</u></b>	Loss of riding privileges for the year, this includes Ace/Alternative placement and summer school.

**Please Note:** Transportation Administration reserves the right to skip steps and enforce penalties based on the severity of the infraction. Any disciplinary questions please contact the appropriate disciplinary personnel.

**Discipline Personnel Contacts for grade levels:**

**(Pre-k-5th)** Sonia Longoria (Assistant Operations Supervisor) 630-4425

**(6th-12th)** Nikki Lamon (Operations Supervisor) 630-4458

**Parents are required to utilize your grade level supervisor for any assistance with discipline or concerns.**

**Complaints/Department Chain of Command:**

**Level 1 – Sonia Longoria - Assistant Operations Supervisor – 630-4425**

**Level 2 – Nikki Lamon – Operations Supervisor – 630-4458**

**Level 3 – Belinda Wade – Assistant Director – 630-4429**

**If you have a complaint use the step level contacts listed above. Do not skip the chain of command. You will be re-directed to communicate with the appropriate supervisor for assistance.**

**Regular Education Routes and Stops:**

**LISD Transportation Department does not offer front door service for regular education students.** Lufkin ISD offers established routes and stops to accommodate all regular education eligible students with reasonable **safety** assurances and consideration for length of ride times. Lufkin ISD has established walk to stop guidelines for all age groups listed below. We recommend and encourage parents to play an active role in their children’s safety by accompanying them to and from their stop.

**Walking distances:**

Pre-K-2nd grade	up to .25 miles
Elementary grades 3-5	up to .25 miles
Secondary grade 6-12	up to .5 miles

**TEC 37.126. Disruption of Transportation:**

**Never attempt to stand in front of the bus or block the bus with your vehicle. It is against the law to disrupt school transportation. A person commits an offense if the person intentionally disrupts, prevents, or interferes with the lawful transportation of children to or from school or activity sponsored by a school on a vehicle owned or operated by a county or independent school district. If this occurs your child will lose their riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.**

### **Loading Procedures:**

Students must be prepared to load immediately when the bus arrives. This means in the morning time and at the campus upon release from school. Any intentional delaying on boarding may cause you to miss your bus. Be prepared.

### **Students may only board their assigned bus from their designated stop.**

1. Be at your designated stop 10 minutes prior to pick-up time. This means as the bus stops and sets the parking brake students must be ready to load. Drivers must follow a precise schedule.
2. Students should wait on the sidewalk or in a **safe** area away from the roadway while waiting on the bus.
3. Stand clear of the bus 12 to 15 feet until it comes to a complete stop and the parking brake is set.
4. If crossing a street wait for the driver to signal you when it is **safe** to cross.
5. Only cross in front of the bus 12 to 15 feet away from the bumper so the driver can visually see you.
6. Check both directions and walk directly to the bus.
7. Enter the bus one at a time with no pushing and go straight to your assigned seat.
8. If the student misses the bus **DO NOT** chase the bus. Parents **DO NOT** chase the bus in your vehicle or bring your child to another stop to catch the bus. Under these circumstances you will be required to take your child to school. These are serious **safety** violations.

### **Unloading Procedures:**

### **Students may only depart their assigned bus at their designated stop.**

1. Stay seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and the parking brake is set.
2. Wait for your turn to exit the bus do not push or shove.
3. Use the handrail and take one step at a time during exit. Do not jump down the stairs.
4. Once departed move away from the bus 12 to 15 feet so the driver can visually see that you are clear of any danger areas. **Do not touch the bus or walk close to the bus after exiting.**
5. If any article drops or rolls near or under the bus do not go after it or approach the bus. Signal the driver and wait for assistance.
6. Any student needing to cross a street will exit the bus and move to a point 12 to 15 feet in front of the right-side bumper and wait for the driver to signal you that it is **safe** to cross.
7. Check in both directions and walk directly across the road.
8. Never cross the road behind the bus.

***Caution!*** Be alert for vehicles that do not stop when the bus is loading and unloading. Loading and unloading is the most dangerous time for student safety and are when most fatalities occur. Please take extra precautions during these times.

### **Unloading procedures continued: Parental requirements/Return rule**

A Parent/Guardian, emergency contact designee or consenting adult **must** be at the stop for Pre-K through second grade. **This is a school district requirement. All designees must be listed in**

**emergency contacts with updated phone numbers to receive the student. No exceptions.**

**Please review frequently asked questions # 8.** If the parent or designee fails to be at the designated stop on time students will be returned to the following destinations. Pre-K students will be returned to their instructional campus. Kinder through second grade students will be returned to transportation located at 811 South Timberland. Upon the third return to transportation or their instructional campus riding privileges will be suspended for a period of 3 days. The returns are cumulative and will be recorded as follows; 4<sup>th</sup> return 5 days, 5<sup>th</sup> return 10 days, 6<sup>th</sup> return 15 days, 7<sup>th</sup> return riding privileges will be suspended for the remainder of the school year. Student returns causes our bus routes to run late.

Do not expect the drivers to know your car at the stop. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to be present at the bus stop to receive their child. We do have substitute drivers who will fill in absences of our regular drivers and they will not let your child off unless they can verify that you are the parent or guardian who can receive the student. They will not know what car you drive. If you choose not to come to the stop, you are taking a chance on having your child returned to the campus or transportation department and will be subjected to our student return rule.

Circumstances where a student appears nervous or unsure about getting off the bus or if the driver feels that there is a **safety** concern the driver will keep the student on the bus and return them to transportation (except for Pre-K they will be returned to their campus) and parents will be notified.

### **Accidents or Emergencies:**

1. Stay calm and follow the directions of the Driver/Monitor.
2. Do not depart the bus for any reason other than an emergency evacuation situation deemed necessary by the driver. Remember to stay calm and remain in your seat.
3. EMS and police personnel will be notified immediately in the event any accident occurs.
4. Parents will be notified as soon as possible by transportation personnel. Please be patient as these occurrences can be emotional. We will be diligent in communication and take every precautionary measure to keep your child safe.

### **Boys and Girls Club:**

1. In order to qualify for B&G bussing, student/s must be enrolled at the club. A list of eligible student/s will be updated by B&G staff and sent to our office for verification.
2. **Eligible riders are 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade only.** All students must go inside the club building upon arrival. If a student goes to a car without checking in to the club, they will be suspended from the school bus. All B & G club riders will be held to the discipline and safety expectations outlined in this handbook.

## **Special Education Transportation Service:**

LISD is pleased to provide quality educational services for your children. Our mission in Special Needs Transportation is to ensure your child arrives to school and returns home safely with care and thought given to his/her individual needs.

To be eligible for special education transportation the student must be recommended by the ARD committee in order to receive special education transportation service. If the ARD committee does not recommend special education service, the student will fall under the regular education transportation criteria.

For more information concerning special education transportation please contact our special needs coordinator.

**Linda Cayton, Special needs coordinator, 630-4427**

## **Frequently asked questions:**

### **1. Why does it take up to three days to begin transportation service for my child?**

When a new student is added to a driver's list, the time of pick-up and drop-off changes for all students assigned to their particular bus. Parents will need to be notified by Transportation Services so they have the opportunity to adjust to new pick-up and drop-off times. The driver also needs information about their children before transporting them. The three-day lead between notice and start of transport allows for necessary information processing. Ex: adding a stop or having to readjust route path, and time adjustments. We will make every attempt to expedite the process as fast as possible.

### **2. What if I want my child to get off the bus at another address other than my designated stop?**

In accordance with the Texas Education Agency Transportation Guidelines as well as the Student Safety Handbook, "Transfers to a location other than a student's designated stop are not permitted except that a parent may designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be a district approved stop on a district approved route that meets the two or more-mile requirements from student's instructional campus and within the school's attendance zone to maintain routing efficiency. **Aunt, uncle, brother, sister, friend, place of business will not qualify as a designated stop.**

### **3. Who should I call if the bus does not arrive to pick up my child on time?**

Your child should be at their designated bus stop **ten (10) minutes before** the scheduled arrival

time. If the bus has not arrived fifteen (15) minutes after your scheduled route time, call the Transportation Department at **(936) 634-6516**. Please have your child's bus number, the school of attendance, child's name, and stop location. Route times may fluctuate during the first few weeks of school, so please be patient with us during this time. There are a lot of new riders and many students are transitioning to new schools. The campus traffic is very heavy the first few weeks of school and this can cause delays. Schedules will stabilize.

Other related events such as weather, traffic accidents, road construction, maintenance difficulties and unforeseen incidents can be responsible for delays in the arrival of school buses in the morning and afternoon.

#### **4. Can my child ride home on another bus?**

No. We discourage this from happening because all buses have established student rosters with seating assignments and additional students riding on the bus that they are not assigned causes disturbances in seat assignments and may create overcrowding issues.

#### **5. Who handles discipline on the school bus?**

The driver is the primary authority figure and is responsible for enforcing the safety rules onboard the school bus. All school buses will have rotating bus monitors to help assist drivers with establishing proper student behavior patterns. The school bus safety handbook is provided at the Transportation Services department and available to view on the District's website. This document is a good informational resource to utilize for the success of your child. Riding the bus is a **"privilege"** not a right. Students who misbehave jeopardize their own personal safety as well as the safety of others on board. This is why we have little tolerance for misbehavior on the bus. The driver can handle minor disciplinary problems; speaking to students or reassigning seats. More serious violations will be addressed by Transportation Administrative staff, which can lead to warning, or removal from the bus. If your child is experiencing any issues on the school bus they are strongly encouraged to speak to the driver so we have an opportunity to address and resolve the situation before it escalates.

#### **6. Why did you suspend my child from riding the school bus?**

Behavioral expectations on the school bus are much like those in the classroom. Then, factor in the mobility of that "classroom" and traffic, added noise, and the size of the "classroom"; and you have a potential catastrophe if there are not clear behavioral expectations and enforcement. The behavioral expectations revolve around the individual safety rights of every person on the bus. Anything that jeopardizes the safety of individuals on the bus will be viewed as serious and appropriate action will be taken.

#### **7. The bus goes right down my street. Why can't the bus stop at my house?**

Bus stops are centrally located for all students who live in a specific area. In most cases we try to set our stops at intersections, which are easy to locate and where motorists are more alert to pedestrians. The district attempts to minimize the number of stops so we can reduce student ride

times. Stopping at driveways inconveniences the motoring public causing them to become impatient trying to get around the bus and compromising safety.

#### **8. How do I update information or add someone to my emergency contacts?**

If you need to add additional contacts who are authorized to receive your child, you must make the changes at the school your child attends so it can be uploaded in the skyward system (This is the school's data system that has student/parent information). Transportation cannot make changes in the skyward system we can only view. Please communicate any changes with Transportation so we can make a notation of the change in case the information has not been updated. We will verify with the school that a request has been made.

#### **9. Why does my child have an assigned seat?**

We utilize this strategy to cut down on confusion and gain familiarity with the students. We are able to appropriately manage discipline when the drivers know where students are assigned and are easy to identify if a behavioral conflict occurs. **At no time are Males and females authorized to sit in the same seat.**

#### **10. Why was my child left at the school?**

1. If a student is disruptive and refuses to follow the safety procedures and conduct rules they will be left at the campus and will be required to go report to the office. We cannot transport a student who jeopardizes their own personal safety as well as the safety of others on board the school bus.
2. If a student intentionally delays boarding and the doors of the school bus have been shut, the bus is prepared to depart. Students will not be allowed to enter once the bus has prepared for departure. The drivers will give each and every student adequate time to board. **All students must be prepared to board the school bus promptly** each day so bus schedules and times remain consistent. If a student misses the bus they must go report to the office.

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