

# North Florida Educational Institute



## BUS RIDER HANDBOOK

## **Bus Rider Handbook**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN: Please keep these guidelines for future reference.**

North Florida Educational Institute is looking forward to a great school year. To help achieve that goal, it is important to review the bus procedures, rules, and consequences. These procedures have been established to facilitate safe transportation for our students. It is every student's responsibility to conduct his or her self in a safe and orderly manner. Riding the bus is a privilege and not a right, adhering to these rules will make the ride safe for your student and others. We ask that you appreciate the efforts being put forth to care for your children and to cooperate with school administrators in their pursuit of safe transportation.

### **Parent or Guardian Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of the parent to instill in their child the value of appropriate behavior, good conduct, and to reinforce the policies and goals of the school.

### **Student Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of the student to conduct his or her self in a safe and orderly manner.
- It is the responsibility of the student to treat each other, the bus driver, teachers, staff and school property with respect.
- It is the responsibility of the student to be aware that when their behavior distracts from the ability to provide safe transportation services a consequence and/or punishment will result.

### **Teacher Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of the bus driver to set and maintain Teacher Responsibility
- It is the responsibility of the teacher to review bus rider transportation rules with the student.

### **Administrator Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of the administrator to take disciplinary action when transportation rules and school procedures
- Administrators view bus video/audio recordings, investigate, then make a determination based on the Student Code of Conduct Handbook.

# **The Rules**

The bus is an extension of the school campus. Therefore, students will adhere to all conduct rules while riding an NFEI school bus or van. The violation of any of the following rules will place the student into the bus discipline system.

## **The Bus Driver is in Charge of Their Bus (As a teacher in a classroom)**

### **Bus Assignment Rules**

- NFEI students will ride only their assigned bus
- Students will only get on and off the bus at their designated stop
- Only in EMERGENCY situations will permission be granted to ride another bus or get off at another location on a case by case basis.
- An Emergency Rider Waiver form must be filled out and approved before changes are permitted. Emergency Rider Waiver forms should be requested from the front office.

### **Prohibited Items on Bus**

- NFEI has a “ZERO TOLERANCE” policy on Cell Phone usage
- Possession of sharp or dangerous instruments or any type of weapons
- Animals, glass containers, skateboards, food, or drinks without a closed cap
- Tobacco products (smoking, chewing, or dipping) or other mood altering substances while on the bus
- Bulky or inappropriate objects on bus
- Objects that may block the aisles or emergency exits
- Hats, hoodies, or other garment that makes it difficult to identify the student (exceptions made during inclement weather)
- Gang colors, tags, or making gang symbols
- Personal hygiene items

### **Before Entering Bus**

- Be at the bus stop at least fifteen minutes before bus arrival
- Observe proper rules of conduct while waiting for the bus
- Students shall stay at least five feet off the road and off private property
- No horseplay or fighting at the bus stop
- If it is necessary for a student to cross a road to board a bus, the student should wait until the bus arrives and the driver deploys the stop arm and flashing red lights

- The student should make visual contact with the driver, watching for the Department of Education's adopted crossing signal
- The student should then make a right and left check for traffic and cross twelve (12) feet in front of the bus

### **Entering and Exiting the Bus**

- Carefully get on and off the bus at regularly assigned bus stop
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before entering or exiting the front door of the bus
- Students shall form a line in order to ensure safety in getting on or off the bus
- Staff will assist students at the bus loading zone

### **During the Bus Ride**

- Obey the driver, administrators, teachers, and volunteers at all times
- Students must sit in assigned seats
- Keep all body parts and belongings inside the bus windows
- Follow emergency evacuation procedures when appropriate
- Keep from littering, throwing, or propelling objects inside or outside the bus
- Keep from defacing or vandalizing a school bus
- Use of profanity is prohibited
- There shall be no horseplay or fighting
- Silence at railroad crossings
- When the bus is in motion, only talk to the driver if it is necessary

### **Emergency Exits**

- Do not block emergency exits
- Listen to the driver for emergency instructions

## **Monitoring Equipment**

- NFEI's busses are equipped with video/audio cameras for security purposes.
- Students are taped during their bus ride.
- These tapes are used to determine violations of the Student Code of Conduct Handbook.

## **Discipline**

- Student(s) will be responsible for any damages caused by their conduct that violate(s) the Student Code of Conduct Handbook
- Bus infractions may result in school suspension
- When a student is suspended from the bus, they are not permitted to use **any** NFEI school bus for extracurricular activities or field trips during the suspension timeframe
- At the administrator's discretion, a student with a Level I or II infraction may be allowed to ride the bus for extracurricular activities and field trips that are academic in nature
- School officials may address any incident occurring at the bus stop that may have an adverse impact on the school
- Bus drivers may issue bus referrals based on behavior they observe at bus stops and administrators may investigate and discipline accordingly. §1006.07(2)(h), §1006.09(1)(b), and §1006.10(3), Florida Statutes
- Section 1006.10 (1-7), Florida Statutes, gives school bus drivers the authority to monitor and control the behavior of students any time they are being transported to and from school or school functions at public expense

## **Parental Responsibility**

- Parents/Guardians are responsible for their children at their assigned bus stop
- Parents/Guardians will be responsible for any damages caused by the student(s) that violate(s) the Student Code of Conduct Handbook
- If a student does not ride for three (3) consecutive mornings, the bus will not return or stop until you notify the driver that the student will again be riding

## **Unauthorized Persons**

- Unauthorized persons may not board an NFEI bus
- Violation of this provision may result in possible prosecution under Florida law

## Disciplinary process: Improper Conduct

For any offense, the bus driver may choose to re-assign the student to a specific seat, confer with the student, or call the parent. If a verbal warning from the driver fails to improve the student’s behavior, the offense will be written up by the driver and submitted to the front office. When a write up is issued, the following progressive discipline process will be in effect:

**1st offense** – Driver issues bus citation to the student for parent notification. A letter could be sent or a phone call placed to the parent or guardian by administration or its designee.

**2nd offense** - A letter will be sent or a phone call placed to the parent or guardian. May require a conference with the student and/or parent. May also issue a mandatory suspension from **all** buses from three (3) to five (5) days. The parent or guardian will be notified. If unable to reach parent by phone, a written notice will be sent home with your child.

**3rd offense** – May require a conference with the student and/or parent. May also issue a mandatory suspension from **all** buses from six (6) days up to the remainder of the semester. The parent or guardian will be notified. If unable to reach parent by phone, a written notice will be sent home with your child.

**4th offense** - May issue a mandatory suspension from **all** buses for the remainder of the school year and possibly extended to the following school year. The parent or guardian will be notified. If unable to reach parent by phone, a written notice will be sent home with your child.

<b>North Florida Educational Institute has a “Zero Tolerance Policy” for violations on school busses. Therefore, the following consequences are mandatory:</b>	
1st Referral	Warning or a 1-10 days Bus Suspension, at principal’s discretion
2nd Referral	3-10 Days - Bus Suspension
3rd Referral	5-10 Days - Bus Suspension
4th Referral	Bus Expulsion (90 day minimum) or at principal’s discretion, a 10 day Bus Suspension with a parent/guardian/principal conference and a written, signed, behavior agreement, may defer expulsion.
Any Level IV Offense occurring on the bus shall result in a recommendation for expulsion.	

Any of the above steps may be skipped dependent on the severity of the offense.

## **Examples of Improper Conduct (All Offenses)**

Examples include but are not restricted to, any of the following:

1. Yelling, or screaming
2. Putting your feet or other items in the aisle
3. Rude, disrespectful to anyone on the bus
4. Using bad words, cursing or profanity of any kind
5. Throwing things on the bus
6. Shouting or yelling out of the window.
7. Obscene gestures to other passengers or outside the bus.
8. Wearing a hat, a hoodie, or other garment if it makes it difficult to identify the student.
9. Touching or putting hands on another student in an aggressive manner.
10. Violation of safety procedure that could endanger anyone.
11. Any instance of 'horseplay'
12. Arguing with or showing disrespect to the driver.
13. Not sitting in their assigned seat
14. Failure to immediately correctly identify themselves, to the driver.
15. Smoking, chewing, or possession of drugs or tobacco products. No lighters, matches, firearms, explosives of any kind.
16. Vandalizing or damaging bus property is prohibited and students who do so will be responsible for payment to cover the cost of damages
17. Tampering with bus emergency or safety equipment, video cameras or DVRs.
18. Physical assault of another person.
19. Inappropriate displays of affection.
20. Improperly clothed or inappropriately changing or removing clothes, displaying gang colors, gang tags, or making gang symbols. School dress code, per student handbooks, applies to the bus.
21. Picking on other students.
22. Getting on or off the bus at an incorrect location.
23. Others as identified by transportation personnel.
24. Any instance of major fighting (Taking part in a violent struggle involving the exchange of physical blows where punches were either thrown or landed or weapons were used).
25. Sexual misconduct (Sexual misconduct encompasses sexual conduct of a sexual nature that is with or without consent or has the effect of threatening or intimidating the person against whom such conduct is directed. For Example: exposing his or her genitals: soliciting or requesting another person to engage in sexual conduct under circumstances in which he knows that their requests or solicitation is likely to cause affront or alarm; forcing a victim to touch, directly or through clothing, another person's genitals, breast, groin, thighs or buttocks) or sexual harassment (the making of unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks; intentional touching without consent, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature to such an extent that it alters the conditions of the person's environment.)
26. Possession of an object that may be considered dangerous or used as a weapon, verbal threats of violence (to include cursing), or physical assault of the driver or other transportation official by a student or his or her parent, guardian, or representative will result in immediate termination of riding privileges and may result in permanent expulsion from the school and/or arrest.

**There is no excuse for any offense**

**When a severe violation is believed to have occurred, bus riding privileges can be revoked immediately and indefinitely for safety purposes. A parent or will be properly notified. The future disposition of the student's riding status will be determined after a thorough investigation is completed by School Administration.**