



SCHOOL BUS USE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

RATIONALE

All children and young people are entitled to an education; and in South Australia, school attendance is compulsory for all children and young people aged 6-16 years old. To enable access to school, Burra Community School provides bus transport to and from the site along pre-determined routes; and for families/students residing more than 5km from their closest Government school (users not meeting this criterion are able to access a school bus only if room is available, or via a bus pass for ad hoc travel).

In line with the Department for Education's *School Transport Policy*, a school bus service provided by the department is considered an extension of the school served by the bus. As such, children and young people using school buses are under the duty of care of the school and the Principal is responsible for day-to-day bus operations. Users are expected to maintain the same school standards of behaviour and uphold school values while on the bus to ensure their own and others' safety.

For the full concern of bus transport at Burra Community School, this procedure is to be read in conjunction with the department *School Transport Policy* (v1.9; January, 2024) and *Burra Early Learning Centre and Burra Community School Bus Procedure* (January, 2023). Please note, on a catastrophic fire danger day, buses do not run and the school is closed.

OBJECTIVES

Safety at school bus stops and on school buses is of critical importance to ensure bus users are safe, and drivers can maintain optimal focus and attention to driving safely on our roads and highways. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all users and drivers, Burra Community School, in alignment with the **Education and Children's Service Regulations 2020, Regulation 28**, sets standards of behaviour for students on buses and procedures to ensure drivers control those standards and report breaches accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION

In managing the safety and wellbeing of all drivers and users, Burra Community School enforces standards of behaviours and takes whatever action is considered necessary in line with the school policy to ensure both access to attend school; and the safety and wellbeing of all bus users and drivers. The conditions for use apply for travel on all school-operated buses and travel is not permitted until signed acknowledgement and acceptance of these expectations is received by the Principal.

To enable bus travel, parents/caregivers and students are therefore required to:

1. familiarise themselves with their responsibilities outlined in the *Conditions of Use* (below).
2. acknowledge requirements by returning a signed *School Bus User Agreement* prior to travel.
3. adhere to these expectations as a condition of use.

CONDITIONS OF USE ("EXPECTATIONS")

The Principal transfers duty of care for the supervision of students to the driver for the duration of a bus route. The driver therefore has responsibility to enforce user expectations in line with Department and School policy; and similarly, will report any actions or behaviours in breach of this user agreement and policy to the Principal.

Driver responsibilities are to:

1. Adhere to *Essential school bus driver requirements (March, 2024)*.
2. Ensure the safety and behaviour of students while they are entering, travelling in and alighting from the bus:
 - a. drive in a safe manner as a priority.
 - b. allocate seats and make sure children sit in assigned seats, as authorised by the Principal. *The bus driver may also change the seating arrangement in order to address safety concerns, as required.*
 - c. remind and encourage students to use seatbelts and report any student who refuses to wear their seatbelts to the Principal. *The bus driver must not physically intervene if a student chooses not to wear their seatbelt.*
 - d. stop the bus in the event a behaviour interferes with the safety of other users or the bus and do not proceed until the behaviour has ceased and safe conduct is restored. *This safety response overrides the need to maintain the allocated time schedule.*
 - e. drop students off only at their designated (normal) bus stop, unless prior notice and approval has been given in advance from the Deputy Principal.
 - f. Use discretion in an emergency situation.
3. Communicate breaches of expectations:
 - a. keep records of all behaviour in breach of the expectations for bus use.
 - b. address minor breaches of bus expectations directly with the student/parents, as soon as possible.
 - c. report repeated minor breaches to the Deputy Principal with documentation (including how prior incidents have been managed or addressed with the student and/or parents/caregivers).
 - d. report serious and/or persistent breaches, and any incident or concern which interferes with the safe operation of other users or the bus to the Deputy Principal. *A member of leadership will investigate any reported breaches and if substantiated, take whatever action is considered necessary in line with the school policy on student behaviour and management procedure outlined below. An incident report and/or mandatory notification will be made, as appropriate.*

Student responsibilities are to:

1. Wait for the bus in an orderly manner:
 - a. wait quietly, and well back from the bus until it stops
 - b. embark patiently, waiting turns in line
2. Use the bus safely:
 - a. follow the seating plan – move to your allocated seat immediately, and stay in your allocated seat at all times.
 - b. wear your seatbelt at all times, facing the front and ensuring no body parts or items protrude from the bus.
 - c. store your school bag under the seat or in the appropriate luggage area.
 - d. demonstrate respect for the bus as school property – sit on seats with feet remaining on/towards the floor, leave bus property and equipment alone, nothing is to be thrown in or from the bus.
 - e. drink only cold water from plastic/stainless steel bottles if needed (in the interest of health and wellbeing); otherwise refraining from eating or drinking on the bus at all.
3. Behave with respect, responsibility and honesty on the bus:
 - a. show respect for the bus driver at all times, following the driver's instructions and directions about safety and expectations without question or argument.
 - b. speak quietly and avoid unnecessary noise.
 - c. use polite and kind language.
 - d. respect other's personal space and property.
 - e. use a personal device only for listening to music with headphones (ie no taking photography or video under any circumstances).
4. Leave the bus in an orderly manner:
 - a. wait until the bus has come to a halt before standing to get off the bus.
 - b. leave the bus in a quiet and orderly manner, without interfering with other bus users.
 - c. wait in the designated area until the bus has moved away from the bus stop before moving to own transport or crossing roads

5. Use designated bus routes and stops:
 - a. advise your bus driver in advance, if you know you will be absent; show diary note to the Front Office.
 - b. obtain a bus pass if not a regular user of that bus route or stop (ie for ad hoc travel, or changed travel arrangements).
6. Follow emergency procedures in the event of a breakdown:
 - a. remain on the bus until a replacement bus is deployed and arrives for transport via the normal bus route.
 - b. follow driver's emergency directions should it be unsafe to remain in the bus.

Parent/carer responsibilities are to:

1. Ensure the safety of bus drivers and users at drop-off and pick-up:
 - a. Park at a safe distance from the allocated bus stop.
 - b. Be punctual for student drop-off and pick-up to ensure the bus is able to adhere to its required time schedule. *Please note, if parents/carers are not at the agreed collection point at the allocated time after school, the bus driver will attempt to make phone contact. Should contact not be able to be made following that phone call, students will be transported back to Burra Community School (Library) to be collected by the parent/caregiver before 6.00pm, as per the Department guideline.*
 - c. Drive away from bus drop-off and pick-up at the required speed limit, with caution to student safety.
2. Behave with respect, responsibility and honesty at bus stops and in relation to bus matters:
 - a. show respect for the bus driver at all times, acknowledging reports of concern regarding your child/ren without argument.
 - b. use polite and kind language when conversing with the driver, users or others.
 - c. respect others' privacy by not taking photos or video of the bus stop, bus or its users under any circumstances.
 - d. pay for bus and related property damages caused by your child/ren, as requested by the School (following investigation and substantiation).
3. Support bus organisation:
 - a. Call the school or write a note in the student's diary to notify changes to travel arrangements (ie change of address, bus, or bus stop)
 - b. Apply for and obtain a **bus pass** for ad hoc travel on buses (ie temporary transport request) at least **2 days prior** to the travel. *Please note, permission may not be granted if the required bus is full.*

FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to observe the bus expectations will result in disciplinary action, as per the following procedure:

Step 1: Reminder – Bus driver provides verbal reminder of the expectation/s and requests behaviour to stop immediately.

Step 2: Formal warning (first report) - A formal report of repeated minor breach or major incident is made to Deputy Principal to investigate. *Please note, this is a repeat warning for a given student, not necessarily for a repeat behaviour.*

- i. Deputy Principal or member of leadership investigates with bus driver and student/s to substantiate and clarify report. *Camera footage may be consulted.*
- ii. Deputy Principal or member of leadership make phone call to parents/caregivers to report the behaviour and concerns, and to gather further information, as necessary.
- iii. Written notice of the breach is sent home to parents/caregivers to acknowledge and must be signed and return to school within 3 days of issue.
- iv. If signed acknowledgement is not received within 3 days of issue, the student/s responsible will not be permitted to travel until the signed notice is returned to school.

Step 3: Repeat warning (second report) – A formal report of repeated minor breach or major incident is made to Deputy Principal to investigate.

- i. Process as per formal warning (Step 2), with the following addition to the written notice:
“This is the second breach formally reported and substantiated for your child this term. A third report will result in suspension from bus travel.”

Step 4: Final warning (third report) – A formal report of repeated minor breach or major incident is made to Deputy Principal to investigate.

- i. Process as per formal warning (Step 2), with the following addition to the written notice:
*“This is the third breach formally reported and substantiated for your child this term. As was communicated at the time of the second breach, your child is now formally suspended from bus travel for **1 school day.**”*
- ii. Deputy Principal or member of leadership make phone call to parents/caregivers notifying them directly of the suspension from bus travel for **1 school day**; clearly communicating that this suspension must not be a reason for the child's non-attendance at school the following day (in line with attendance policy).

Step 5: Subsequent reports – Additional formal reports concerning a given child are made to Deputy Principal.

- i. Investigation proceeds as per formal warning (Step 2) to substantiate and clarify concern.
- ii. Behaviour initiating a fourth report in a school term will incur bus suspension of **3 school days**.
 - Any further incidents will result in bus suspension of **5 school days**.
- iii. Behaviour initiating a fourth report in a school year will incur bus suspension of **1 school day**.
 - Any further incidents will result in bus suspension of **3 school days**.

Reports made by students and/or parents will also be investigated as per the procedure above.

In the case of substantiated major or illegal behaviour, or violence, immediate elevation to Step 5 may be necessary, at the Principal's discretion. Parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately. Consultation shall take place with the Department's *Incident Management Directorate* and/or SAPOL personnel, as necessary. Immediate suspension from bus travel may occur.

Children are still required to attend school in the event of a bus suspension – bus suspension does **not permit school absence. It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to ensure their child attends school.**

- Repeated non-attendance due to bus suspension will be escalated to the Department's *Social Work and Truancy Officer*.
- Any student travelling by bus whilst under bus suspension will incur a school suspension.
- Ongoing non-compliance may result in an extended bus suspension.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

General concerns about bus use or behaviour may be raised with the following staff at Burra Community School:

- Bus drivers
- Deputy Principal, Morgan Randall
- Bus administration officer, Kathy Laidlaw

Ongoing concerns or an appeal against a particular school bus management decision must be made in writing to the Principal. If the concern remains unresolved, the grievance should be forwarded to the region's Education Director – Gawler 2 Portfolio.

EVALUATION

This policy is reviewed as part of the school's 3-year review cycle.

This policy was reviewed in March, 2024

Review: March, 2027