

Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel

Guide for Students and Parents

Each year students going to and from schools in the Northern Territory undertake over 1 million bus trips.

Most students behave appropriately most of the time. However, misbehaviour by some students can make travel unpleasant for their colleagues, disrupt the driver, result in damage to vehicles or, in extreme cases, put bus occupants and other road users at serious risk.

To help ensure that school students behave sensibly and safely on the buses, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure together with bus operators, schools and police, have developed this Code of Conduct for students, school bus drivers, and operators.

What is the Code of Conduct?

The Code is a set of guidelines for students to follow on school buses. It forms the basis for the specific rules that bus operators develop to manage behaviour on their buses.

It also includes procedures for bus operators and drivers and schools to follow.

This document advises the community of the broad procedures that are already being used and which will be updated periodically.

To whom does it apply?

This Code applies to all students attending primary and secondary schools in the Northern Territory who use buses to travel to or from school or for other school related activities.

How does the Code benefit you?

The Code sets standards of behaviour and provides an agreed systematic process so that disruptions or misbehaviour by students is dealt with quickly and fairly. It also aims to minimise the number and severity of these disruptions.

What are the standards?

The following table lists some of the types of behaviour that are encouraged and those, which are not allowed.

Parents/ carers should discuss these with their children so they all clearly understand what they should and should not do.

For most students complying with the Code will not require any change in their current behaviour. By continuing to act in accordance with this Code students will help ensure that all passengers have a comfortable and safe journey.

Behaviour	Examples of how to meet the Code
Respect other people and property.	<p>Treat other people and their possessions with respect. Follow the bus driver's directions without argument. Do not interfere with bus property, equipment, shelters and signs by marking, removing or damaging them.</p>
Wait for the bus in an orderly manner.	<p>Wait well back from the bus until it stops and allow other passengers to leave the bus first. Stand quietly without calling out or shouting. Do not push other people in the line.</p>
Whilst on the bus, conduct yourself in an orderly manner.	<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Always follow instructions from the driver about safety on the bus. ▪ Show their bus pass, ticket or ID whilst boarding the bus or on request by an Inspector or Police. ▪ Sit properly on a seat if one is available (in allocated seat if directed by the driver). ▪ If standing, remain in the area designated by the driver. ▪ Store school bags under the seat or in luggage areas. ▪ Speak quietly and do not create unnecessary noise <p>Students must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bully other students. ▪ Place feet on the seats. ▪ Fight, spit or use offensive language. ▪ Throw any article around or from the bus. ▪ Leave rubbish on the bus, or at stops or interchanges. ▪ Consume food or drink, or play music without permission of the driver. ▪ Smoke (prohibited on all buses). ▪ Allow any portion of their body to protrude out of the bus. ▪ Stand forward of the front seat.
Use designated stops.	<p>It is the responsibility of students to disembark at their correct designated stop.</p>
When alighting from the bus, do so in an orderly manner.	<p>Wait until the bus stops before standing to get off. Get off the bus in a quiet and orderly fashion. Never cross the road in front of the bus, wait until the bus has moved away and it is safe to cross. Use crossings or traffic lights if available.</p>
In case of an emergency or a breakdown, follow the driver's directions.	<p>Wait until the bus stops before standing to get off. Leave the bus in a quiet and orderly fashion. Wait in the area indicated by the driver.</p>

What happens if students do not comply with the Code?

When a student does not abide by the Code action may range from a caution to refusal of future travel on the school buses depending on a number of factors including:

- the threat to the safety of passengers on the bus and the nature of the incident;
- the seriousness of the breach;
- the age of the student; and
- whether the breach was a first or one of a series of incidents about which the student had been previously cautioned.

(Procedures for managing misbehaviour amongst school children travelling on buses in the NT are attached.)

To promote consistency and fairness in responding to students who do not abide by the Code, misbehaviour has been divided into three categories of seriousness.

Categories of Seriousness and Consequences

1. Nuisance and Offensive Behaviour

Examples - Category one includes behaviour that may be irritating or unpleasant but not physically dangerous. Behaviours such as: failing to show a bus pass; eating on the bus; spitting; or using offensive language.

Result – initially a warning will be given. However, repeated offences may lead to a ban on the student travelling for up to 5 school days.

2. Dangerous Behaviour

Examples - Category two includes behaviours where there may be some physical danger to individuals, including: distracting the driver by persistent noise; harassing and bullying other passengers; not remaining seated; standing on steps; verbally threatening the driver; or swinging on bus handrails.

Result – no warnings given and will lead to a ban on the student travelling for up to 10 school days.

3. Very Destructive and Dangerous Behaviours

Examples - Category three includes behaviours that are *very dangerous to individuals* or *very destructive* such as: throwing objects that have the potential to cause harm or damage; fighting; marking or damaging bus property (breaking windows, slashing seats, etc); or repeated occurrences of dangerous behaviour;

or

are *life threatening* such as: physically attacking the driver or other passengers; pushing students out through doors or windows; lighting a fire on the bus; interfering with the safe mechanical operation of the bus; or threatening physical harm with a dangerous weapon.

Result – no warnings given, immediate 10 school day ban applied while decisions are made by the operator about the duration of a longer term ban on school bus travel and possible civil or Police action.

Fair processes

Students will only be refused travel after the bus operator has informed the school principal and parents/ carers. A review process is available to parents and carers.

Contact Details (as at February 2008)

Contractors:

Buslink:		General Manager	8947 0577
Buslink Humpty Doo:		Depot Manager	8988 2762
Darwin Bus Service:		Manager	8924 5471
Cookes Tours:	Batchelor	Manager	8976 0140
Kansas:	Nhulunbuy	Manager	8987 2872

Department of Planning and Infrastructure:

Public Transport Division Manager, Public Transport Policy	8924 7846
or Network Supervisor	8924 7848