



# DECD CODE OF SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS/CAREGIVERS IN AND AROUND SCHOOL BUSES

## KEY SAFETY MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN

Dangers can exist for children on their way from home to the bus stop, boarding, travelling in, alighting from the bus, and on their way home from the bus stop. To help children recognise some of the dangers, and have a safe journey from home to school to home, the following rules should be put to use.

### ALWAYS WAIT SAFELY FOR THE BUS

- When waiting for the bus keep well back from the road side.
- Do not play ball games or run around at the bus stop.
- Do not wander away from the bus stop.

### ALWAYS TRAVEL SAFELY ON THE BUS

- Sit in your seat, keep your bag/s under the seat and not in the bus passageway.
- If you are required to stand for a time (policy limit 20 minutes) because all seating positions are occupied, store your bags under a seat, and stand in the bus passageway between a row of seats.
- Grip the seat handholds on both sides of the passageway.
- Remain in your seat or at your standing position until the bus reaches your set down points.
- When the bus has completely stopped, alight in a safe and orderly manner.

### ALWAYS FOLLOW THE SCHOOL BUS PASSENGER SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

ALL **APPROVED DECD SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS** HAVE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS.

### YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO

- Be on time for the bus at pick-up points.
- Sit in your assigned seat.
- Place your bags in a safe place (under the seat) so that other passengers can easily get on/ off the bus.
- Respect the needs, comfort and property of other passengers using the bus.
- Not throw any article inside or out of the bus.
- Keep your whole body inside the bus.
- Not swear, use rude gestures, tease anyone on the bus or talk loudly.
- Respect bus property (i.e. seats, panels, rear emergency exit door, fire extinguisher, first aid kit) by not tampering, marking or damaging it.
- Not distract the driver except in an emergency.
- Listen to and follow the driver's instructions.
- Solve problems by talking them through calmly and quietly.
- Speak to an adult about your concerns.



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## YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO

- Travel by school bus as a right or in accordance with certain policy conditions.
- Travel in safety.
- Seek help when something happens on the bus (or at the bus stop) that worries you.

## ALWAYS CROSS ROADS SAFELY TO GET TO THE BUS STOP

- Always choose the safest place to cross, and wait and watch until the traffic is clear. Walk across the road, looking and listening for traffic.
- The safest place is where you can see the traffic clearly and drivers can see you. Unsafe places are at bends and/or crests in the road, between parked cars/trucks or at street corners.
- Make sure trees/bushes or parked cars/trucks do not block your view of traffic and the driver's view of you.
- Use pedestrian crossings if they are available and nearby. Take time to make sure it's safe to cross.

## ALWAYS CROSS ROADS SAFELY AFTER ALIGHTING FROM THE BUS

- Always wait until the bus has completely gone from the bus stop and is out of sight before you begin to look for a safe place to cross. It is **extremely dangerous** to cross while the bus is stopped on the road or when the bus has just moved on and is still in sight, because the bus will block your view of following or oncoming traffic and the driver's view of you.
- Watch the traffic from both directions and choose the safest time and place to cross.
- Choose a place where you can see the traffic and the drivers can see you.
- Wait and watch until the traffic is clear. Remember cars/trucks can travel at high speeds, eg. 80 or 100 kilometres per hour on highways and certain roads. A car or truck travelling at 100 kph covers 28 metres (the length of a cricket wicket and more) in just 1 second.
- Keep away from bends and/or crests in the road, parked cars/trucks, trees/bushes and busy corners.

## KEY SAFETY MESSAGES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

In sharing responsibility for the safety of school bus children, parents/guardians are responsible for their children's safety on their way from home to the bus stop, at the stop, and on their way from the bus stop to home. The Department is responsible for children's safety while boarding, travelling in and alighting from DECD provided school buses, and the management and provision of a safe school bus system. The following key safety messages are designed to assist parents/guardians in this matter.



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## **ALWAYS SAFELY LEAVE AND MEET YOUR CHILDREN AT THE BUS STOP**

- Allow sufficient time to safely leave and meet your children at the bus stop.
- Be on time for the bus at the pick-up point.
- On the way to the bus stop remind your children of the safety rules.
- Regardless of convenience, **always park your car on the bus stop side of the road.**
- The safest place to park a car on the bus stop side of the road is away from bends, crests or street corners.
- Where practicable your children should get out/in the car from the footpath, not the road.
- Lock your car and accompany your children, especially younger aged children, to/from the bus stop.

## **REINFORCE SCHOOL BUS AND ROAD SAFETY RULES WITH YOUR CHILDREN IN A WAY WHICH BEST SUITS THEM INDIVIDUALLY**

This is especially important where parents/guardians cannot always meet or wait with their children at the bus stop.

## **PARTICIPATE IN ANY SCHOOL ORGANISED SAFETY ACTIVITIES WHERE POSSIBLE**

## **PROMOTE SAFETY PRACTICES IN AND AROUND SCHOOL BUSES IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND WITH VISITORS**

- For example, many local/visiting motorists are not aware of or acknowledge the Road Traffic Act, special speed limit, where by law a person must not drive a vehicle at a greater speed than 25 kms per hour while passing a school bus that has stopped on a road for the purposes of permitting children to board or alight.
- Immediately notify the Principal of any perceived unsafe school bus situations or practices.

## **POSSIBLE HIGH RISK SITUATIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS**

A study in New South Wales highlighted the problem of children being injured when alighting from school buses and attempting to cross roads. The injuries occur when children emerge from the

front or rear of the bus unnoticed by following or oncoming motorists as they are shielded from view by the bus. These types of accidents occur in urban/rural areas of NSW, with the more severe injuries occurring in rural areas, which is partly due to the higher travel speeds. Also, a survey in the Medical Journal of Australia of deaths and injuries relating to school buses shows the vast majority happen when children cross the road at the front or rear of the bus after alighting, and that primary children crossing the road after getting off a bus on their way home are most at risk.



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Also, it is very important that children learn to wait until the bus has moved away from the stop and is out of sight, before starting to cross the road

In South Australia, DECD, schools and school communities have given priority to safe bus travel, and for many years have achieved and maintained an excellent safety record in this area. However, student injuries and deaths involving interstate school buses, and recent surveys and studies, continue to remind us of the possible dangers, and of the need to be always vigilant. The code of safety for children and parents/guardians in and around school buses is one of several strategies implemented or under investigation by DECD to improve safety.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle. Ratified August 2023



**Government  
of South Australia**

Department for Education  
and Child Development