

*Promoting
and Supporting
Positive Student
Behaviour*

A Resource for School Bus Drivers and Principals

A safe and accepting learning environment is essential for student achievement and well-being.

The school bus should be seen as an extension of the school environment. Actively promoting and supporting appropriate student behaviour contributes to a safe, inclusive and accepting learning and teaching environment. Principals and bus drivers play a key role in maintaining a positive school environment during the students' time on a school bus.

COLLABORATION: WORKING TOGETHER

Expectations for Safe and Inclusive Transportation

The provincial Code of Conduct sets clear provincial standards of behaviour. These standards of behaviour apply to students whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities and in other circumstances that could have an impact on school climate.

Appropriate behaviour on the school bus is an important part of school bus safety. Students who are deemed eligible by their school board to receive transportation on a school bus receive this service as a privilege, not a right.

Addressing Student Incidents

Open lines of communication between the bus driver and school administrators are especially crucial when responding to incidents that could have a negative impact on the school climate, i.e., inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour.

Inappropriate behaviour that is not addressed becomes accepted behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour can take many forms, such as struggling with self regulation, continued opposition to authority, poor peer relationships, and could escalate in seriousness to include swearing, use of homophobic or racial slurs, inappropriate comments or jokes, graffiti, vandalism, bullying and fighting.

What is required?

The *Education Act* requires that serious student incidents that happen on the bus be reported to the principal. These are incidents that the principal must consider for suspension or expulsion.

These include making threats; possessing alcohol, cannabis (unless the student is authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes), or illegal drugs; swearing at a person in a position of authority;

vandalism and bullying. It also includes possessing a weapon, physical assault, sexual assault, trafficking weapons or drugs, robbery, and giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor.

Who should report?

- school bus drivers
- principals and vice principals
- administrative and custodial staff
- teachers and educational assistants
- early childhood educators employed by the school board
- other school staff, such as those involved in social work, child and youth work, psychology and other related disciplines
- staff in before- and/or after-school programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 that are operated by school boards
- staff in before- and/or after-school programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 operated by community organizations and child care centres which have entered into an agreement with the school board to provide such programming.

How to report an Incident?

- Tell the principal about the incident, as soon as reasonably possible.
- Confirm all reports to the principal in writing using the Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part I, provided by school administrators.

What happens when an incident is reported to the principal?

The principal will provide a written acknowledgement that the report was received and may communicate, where appropriate, whether they have taken any action regarding the incident reported.

Creating a Positive School Climate

Programs and activities that focus on building healthy relationships, a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environment, character development, and positive peer relations provide the foundation for a positive school climate.

Administrators and school bus drivers play an important role in supporting school bus safety, while contributing to a positive learning and teaching environment. In schools or on the school bus when everyone shows respect to one another, it creates an environment where inappropriate behaviour is being discouraged and prevented at all times.

A positive school climate is fostered when everyone in the school – staff, students, parents,¹ and the broader community – helps encourage appropriate student behaviour, which can have a positive impact on the success of all students in the school.

LEARN MORE

For information on making Ontario's schools safe and accepting, and bullying prevention, visit ontario.ca/safeschools.

1. In this document, parent(s) refers to parent(s) and guardian(s) as used in the *Education Act*. It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.