

How to Control Bullying on a School Bus

**Reference Guide and
Test Questions**

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Introduction:

Abusive bullying behavior on school buses is a constant and unpleasant problem for school bus drivers. It's the goal of this video to offer helpful suggestions about how to deter bullying and make the bus a safer way for students to travel to school.

The video will be divided into 5 parts:

1. Part 1 **Preventative Techniques.**
2. Part 2 the importance of the school bus riding **Consequence Plan.**
3. Part 3 the importance of **Student Feedback.**
4. Part 4 the importance of the **School Team** and the role it plays in preventing bullying.
5. Part 5 the importance of recognizing **Early Warning Signs.**

Part I - Preventative Techniques

This section will demonstrate how students are bullied and what drivers can do to prevent this activity.

1. Here are numerous suggestions that bus drivers can pass onto students.
 - a. Often by ignoring bullies you will deprive them of becoming the center of attention.
 - b. When students see bullying, don't ignore it. Let the bully know that what he is doing is not o.k.
 - c. When a bully sexually or physically intimidates another student, encourage students to immediately contact an adult.
 - d. Here are several additional suggestions for bus drivers:
 - Don't sit young students with older students
 - Make sure new students are not seated near bullies
 - Students who are loners or who have weak body language should be monitored by the bus driver
 - Talk with students who appear constantly stressed out. They may be a victim of a bully.
2. Talk with your students about these issues. Let them know you care and you want to help them.

Part 2 - The School Bus Consequence Plan

Every successful school bus riding program must have a consequence plan or something similar. This plan rests on the premise that students must be held accountable for their actions. Students must realize that if they bully other students on the bus they are likely to face suspension of their bus riding privilege.

Here are the key elements of the consequence plan:

1. Each school district should consider having a bus riding contract that stipulates acceptable behavior. The contract must be signed by students and parent(s).
2. Students who break the contract face: temporary suspension, permanent loss of bus riding privilege or additional punishment from the school principal.
3. Here is a list of bullying offenses that will not be tolerated on the bus. • No shoving • No tripping • No verbal abuse or sexual threats • No ridiculing handicapped or overweight students • No weapons of any kind on the school bus

4. Students must be made to realize that each time they are given a referral or warning the severity of the punishment increases. Here is a suggested generic list of referrals:

- **1st referral** - verbal warning • **2nd referral** - written referral must be signed by parents • **3rd referral** - suspension from riding the bus for 1 week
- **4th referral** suspension of bus riding privilege for the entire semester

5. Also, severity of punishment should be graded according to the seriousness of the offense.

6. Bus drivers should make sure they thoroughly know their school district's consequence plan. Always follow the guidelines, rules and regulations of your school district.

Part 3 - Student Feedback

Bus drivers must concentrate on driving their buses safely. Therefore they can't always monitor bullying activities on their school bus. That is why they must rely on their student riders to provide them with tips about bullies on the bus. This section of the video will examine this issue.

1. Always listen to what your students are saying. While many students are prone to exaggeration, there are those instances where the information is right on. Encourage your students to talk with you and let you know what they are hearing on the bus.

2. Subtly encourage your students to provide you with tips and be sure to make the distinction that they aren't tattling. They are providing needed information to stop bullies from terrorizing other students.

3. Reenactment of bullying incident on the school bus

a. Jamie is a classic school bully. He picks on another student (Jeffrey) who is a loner with no friends to back him up.

b. Jamie berates Jeffrey and tells him he's going to get him.

c. The following day Jeffrey decides to walk the mile to school, rather than take the school bus.

d. Jamie sees Jeffrey walking to school and taunts him.

e. Another student, Emilia, notices how Jamie is bullying Jeffrey and tells him to knock it off. He ignores her.

f. Emilia stays behind to talk with the bus driver. She tells the driver what Jamie has been doing to Jeffrey. The bus driver thanks her and tells her she'll take care of it.

g. The driver contacts her supervisor who in turn tells the school principal. The principal calls Jamie into a meeting and tells him he has broken his bus riding contract repeatedly and has lost his bus riding privilege.

4. This example points out the importance of student feedback. The fact that one student identified the bully and then told the bus driver about what was happening, made it possible to nip this problem before it got out of hand.

This example should be used to encourage bus drivers to ask their students for help. The results will be a safer and much more enjoyable atmosphere on their school bus.

Part 4 - The Team Effort

Support from the school staff is a necessity for the prevention of bullying. In this section we will demonstrate the importance of the school team. We will show what happens when a student doesn't believe that the bus driver has the authority to discipline students that are bullying other students.

In the next sequence we will portray a reenactment of one student bullying another student and in the process ignoring the contract she signed to never bully on a school bus. The highlights:

- An otherwise model student, bullies another student.
- The bully insults, taunts and physically abuses another student.
- The bus driver interferes and let's the bully know this is her 3rd referral.
- The bully reacts angrily telling the bus driver she has no authority over her.
- The bus driver informs her they have a date tomorrow morning in the principal's office.
- At the meeting in the principal's office - the bus driver, principal, the bully and her mother are in attendance.
- The principal, after hearing of the incident is interrupted by the bully telling the driver, "after all your nothing but a bus driver".
- The principal then lays down the law. Suspension of riding privilege. She informs bully "We are a community and we support each other".
- The angry bully is paying a price for her actions. The bus driver has been supported by the school team approach.

The sequence concludes by asking a simple but important question. What would the driver have done, if she wasn't sure that administration would have supported her. The answer is probably nothing. The conclusion is: The school bus driver will be assertive in addressing the bullying issue, but only if she has the assurance that her actions will be supported by her school district's administration.

Part 5- Early Warning Signs

In this sequence we ask bus drivers to be aware of how to read the body language of students who are unhappy, burdened and stressed. Students who are being bullied often exhibit body language traits that are early warning signs.

In this next reenactment we will follow the stories of a bully and a bullied student. The sequence is designed to alert bus drivers to be aware of students who exhibit traits of a student that is being bullied. Here is the reenactment:

- Ronnie sits alone. He often enters the bus looking tired and unhappy. The bus driver notices his body language.

- His counterpart is the bully Chuck. He's cocky, extroverted and he has an agenda. He's a poor student and constantly threatens Ronnie to give up his homework, so Chuck can pass his Geometry class.
- We see several students crossing a park to wait the arrival of the school bus. Chuck remains hidden behind a tree waiting for Ronnie.
- Ronnie arrives and Chuck immediately intimidates him. He asks for his homework, but this time Ronnie refuses.
- Chuck's answer is a couple of quick punches that easily knock down Ronnie.
- Ronnie gives up homework and slowly trudges to the bus.
- The driver notices, on the way to school, Ronnie copying down information.
- The driver notices Chuck shoving homework into Ronnie's face as students depart the bus.
- The driver asks Ronnie if everything is o.k. He quietly nods and quickly leaves the bus.
- The driver calls her supervisor who contacts Ronnie's school. They quietly monitor the situation and find out Chuck has been beating Ronnie frequently.
- Chuck will be suspended from school.

There is a simple but important moral to this story. Read your students. If you notice a problem with a student, try and get them to talk with you. If they don't, get some help. School bus drivers can serve an important role. They can warn members of the school team about potential problems. It all begins with being aware and letting administrators know when a problem appears on the horizon.

Epilogue:

Since bullying has been recognized as a national problem here are several things to remember:

1. Work with administration in developing a comprehensive school bus riding consequence plan.
2. Tell students that whenever they report information about bullying their privacy will be protected.
3. Emphasize to students that the team approach insures that bullies will be dealt with quickly and harshly.
4. And always be aware of early warning signs. They are the tell tale signs that something is not right.

School bus drivers are always being asked to stretch themselves. By following many of the ideas in this video, they will be key players in keeping their students and their school bus safe.

Test Questions

1. School bus drivers should not place lower elementary age students next to much older students.

True_____

False_____

2. When a new student starts riding the bus, make him feel at home by telling him to sit anywhere on the school bus.

True_____

False_____

3. When a bully taunts a student, an effective response by the bullied student, is to completely ignore the bully.

True_____

False_____

4. If a student who signs the school bus riding contract is suspended because he broke the rules, he won't lose his bus riding privilege if he promises to never break the rules again.

True_____

False_____

5. Bus drivers should thank a student for reporting a bullying incident by standing up in front of all of the students on the bus and personally mentioning the student by name.

True_____

False_____

6. Since many young students exaggerate information, don't take seriously what they say unless it's corroborated by 2 other students.

True_____

False_____

7. When a bully taunts and ridicules a handicapped or overweight student, tell all the other students not to interfere, because someone else will take care of the problem.

True _____

False _____

8. School bus drivers should not report a bullying incident to their supervisors, if the bully is a star athlete or someone important on the school campus.

True _____

False _____

9. If a bus driver notices a student who appears stressed, withdrawn and constantly preoccupied, which of the following actions should she take.

_____ a. Do nothing because it's a problem for the students counselor.

_____ b. Tell the student to snap out of it and join in with the other students.

_____ c. Contact her supervisor and let her know of the problem.

10. Principals and transportation supervisors are always busy, so only contact them when a problem reaches a crisis stage.

True _____

False _____

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. False
7. False
8. False
9. C
10. False