

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

Driver Conduct

Reference Guide and Test

OPENING

School bus Drivers play an important part in today's educational system. School bus drivers are expected to be role models for children, as well as represent the school district before the public. If school bus drivers set good examples, their attitude of professional responsibility encourages development of social responsibility amongst the students who ride the bus. Our purpose of the video is to introduce new drivers and remind seasoned drivers that they are indeed professionals of their occupation. That it does matter how you dress, act, and come across as a member of the educational system. The video is divided into 3 important sections.:

What is Expected of a School Bus Driver

How should a School Bus Driver Behave

What Steps Can be Taken to Ensure Proper Driver Conduct

What is Expected of a School Bus Driver?

1) A professional school bus driver is someone who is dependable and can be relied upon. School bus drivers are emotionally stable to carry out their work duties and patiently deal with students, parents, school officials and the public. Professional school bus drivers are mature and can cope with unexpected situations. They are neat and clean and should be good representatives for their school district. School bus drivers should also be interested in the welfare of the students they are transporting. They must also be patient, understanding and free from alcohol and drugs.

Public Relations

2) School bus drivers are going to have to deal with parents, the public and school officials on many levels. In many school districts, the bus driver is the only contact that parents have with school personnel, aside from teachers. Impressions of the school, whether it is good or bad, can be conveyed by a bus driver's attitude towards students and

their parents. Drivers will encounter many different types of personalities, attitudes and even cultures when dealing with parents. As a school bus driver, you should strive to treat all people with a courteous and professional manner. Remember, as a bus driver you represent your district and your district represents the community.

3) Law enforcement, such as local police, crossing guards and other school officials, must always be considered too. You should always strive to develop good working relationships with them. Their authority and experience may prove invaluable to you at many points in your career. In addition, good relations with your organization is essential. And good public relations start with fellow employees.

4) Always remember that good, positive public relations depends on the attitude you bring to work everyday. You can make a reputation for yourself and the school by showing pride in your work.

Listen to Authority

5) It is important to keep in mind that someone at your organization is assigned the responsibility of supervising you as an employee. Cooperation with your supervisor and fellow employees is essential. Here are a couple of ways to maintain good cooperation with them:

a) Support the school policy. This shows that you not only agree but are interested in furthering cooperation to ensure student safety.

b) Communicate often with your supervisors and accept their authority. Most supervisors are open to new ideas, however, the bottom line is that they are your supervisor and you must listen to their directions.

6) Consider your transportation director and supervisor as your advisers and partner. You will need their expertise and guidance, particularly when it comes to working through

student discipline problems. Supervisors should be informed of any significant problems that arise. Remember that you are part of a team. With positive communication and steady cooperation you will see how reliability between you and the transportation safety team will dramatically increase.

How Should a School Bus Driver Behave?

7) In the video, we show a demonstration of a bus driver losing his cool after a long night of hanging out with friends. Being a professional driver requires you to control your emotions. The driver in the demonstration did not do that. The driver received no respect from the students on board. The late night obviously was one of the reasons the bus driver lost his temper in front of his students. Also, he was still wearing the same clothes as the night before and he was obviously not in the best condition to transport a bus full of students.

Personal Appearance

8) Personal cleanliness and a neat and clean appearance are important for school bus drivers. It is extremely important to realize that the way you dress and look affects many parts of your job. Many school districts have a dress code set in place, so make sure to follow your districts dress code policies.

9) As a school bus driver, it is necessary to identify yourself as an adult, not a student. To accomplish this, you must dress in a manner that will instill a degree of respect. If you are careless about the way you dress, you cannot receive the level of respect from students on the bus that's needed to maintain good discipline.

10) As previously mentioned, school bus drivers are regularly seen by parents and the public. Thus, it is important that bus drivers project a professional image. Keep in mind that appropriate appearance is geographic. What may be acceptable in rural areas may not

be acceptable in urban areas, and vice versa. However, here are some basic guidelines that can be followed.

- a) All clothing should fit properly and project a professional image.
- b) You should not wear jeans that are ripped or have holes in them.
- c) You should not wear revealing clothing.
- d) You should also avoid wearing risqué clothing with inappropriate logos.

11) The bottom line is that there are a lot of job related duties that may cause injury, if the appropriate clothing isn't worn. Also, wearing appropriate clothing will distinguish yourself as the authority figure on the bus.

12) In addition to keeping your appearance appropriate, keep in mind the buses cleanliness. The bus is an extension of your professionalism. Make sure it is kept clean not only for appearance but to set an example for students.

Establish Yourself as Authority

13) School bus drivers can have a big impact on the kind of day a student has. Drivers should strive to set a positive tone for students who ride their bus. There is a thin line that separates maintaining a positive attitude and establishing yourself as the authority on the bus. Here are some basic techniques to help you walk that line:

- a) **Maintain consistent boundaries and rules.** The students may not like all of the rules set in place, but it's proven that children thrive when there is structure to their daily routines.
- b) **It is important to be firm, but also treat the students with respect** and do not embarrass them in front of their peers.
- a) Make sure to **communicate effectively** by making eye contact and keeping

your voice calm and steady.

14) Let students know the type of behavior expected of them. Let them know about the consequences of misbehaving. And reward good behavior. So much goes into disciplining students when they do something wrong, so why not reward them for doing something right. This can be something as basic as letting them act as a bus monitor or letting them have their choice of seats for the week. Think creatively and have a little fun.

15) A professional bus driver respects and receives respect from students on the bus. A professional bus driver always seeks workable solutions to daily challenges with students. A professional bus driver determines fair and indiscriminate actions. By taking these basic techniques and applying them everyday, the students on your bus will recognize you as the authority figure and will know that you are in charge of the bus.

Controlling Emotions

16) Have you ever had one of those horrible mornings? Where everything seems to go wrong? We portrayed just that in the video. In the video example, the driver was upset, her daughter was disrespecting her, she was running late for work and her supervisor got on her case for not completing her post trip inspection. That makes for a terrible start to the day. However, the driver put her personal issues aside and greeted students in the morning with a positive attitude and a friendly smile.

17) The driver must learn to be in control of their emotions, always keeping in mind that you are transporting a bus full of what can be, loud students. It is your job to not let that affect your professionalism. You must be able to perform your job tasks without your personal problems affecting it. Many times, if you are happy driving the bus, the students are happy to ride it.

What Steps Can be Taken to Ensure Proper Driver Conduct?

18) As a school bus driver, there are several things you can do to make sure you are in prime condition to safely operate the bus and deal with student behavioral issues.

Get Plenty of Rest

19) First of all, take care of yourself. That means get the proper rest necessary to not only drive the bus safely, but also make sure you can remain calm and keep your composure when student behavior y gets out of hand. Going back to the driver that lost his cool, he did not keep his composure and lost respect from students on board.

20) Making sure that you are well rested is very important. With a rested body and mind, you will be able to conduct yourself in a well represented manner. And of course, it should go without saying to never use illegal drugs or drive under the influence of alcohol.

Maintain a Professional Attitude

21) In an occupation that is demanding both physically and mentally, it is important to maintain a professional attitude throughout the day. One thing you can do for yourself is to give yourself credit for what you are doing well. You know how hard it is to be a school bus driver. Think about every morning and afternoon that you have been able to get students back home safely. Think about all the time you have spent to accurately do a complete pre trip inspection. Think about the students and parents who have depended on you, and that you have not let down. There is a lot of instances that you can give yourself credit for. You should occasionally take a moment to reflect on them and how important your role is.

Cultural Diversity

22) As part of the conduct of a school bus driver, you must take into account that you may be transporting students with a variety of cultural differences. As a professional school bus driver you need to be able to recognize these differences and that students language, expressions or body language are not necessarily a personal attacks on the driver. A driver doesn't need to be an expert in all cultural dialects and mannerisms, but drivers should respect the differences. The professional bus driver shows good conduct by disciplining based on a students actions rather than the ethnicity of the student.

CLOSING

Throughout the video, we have given examples of the wrong and right way that school bus drivers should conduct themselves. We have given techniques for maintaining a positive attitude, as well as interacting with students, parents and other school transportation personnel. Remember that the school bus is an extension of the classroom. You are constantly setting examples and teaching. The school bus is a perfect environment for teaching real-life situations. Take this opportunity to enrich the students riding your bus. Always stay on top of your game. Always remember your importance within the educational community. You should never compromise your best job performance. And finally, believe in yourself.

TEST QUESTIONS

1) It makes no difference how a bus driver behaves as long as they drive the bus safely.

TRUE or FALSE

2) Cooperation with your supervisor and fellow employees is essential.

TRUE or FALSE

3) Personal cleanliness and a neat, clean appearance are important for school bus drivers.

TRUE or FALSE

4) As long as you have a neat appearance, it does not matter how clean the bus is.

TRUE or FALSE

5) You can get students attention by raising your voice to a level where they will listen.

TRUE or FALSE

6) You have to always be in control of your emotions as a school bus driver.

TRUE or FALSE

7) Making sure that you are well rested is very important.

TRUE or FALSE

8) You shouldn't pat yourself on the back for just doing your job right.

TRUE or FALSE

9) A professional bus driver shows good conduct by disciplining based on a students actions rather than the ethnicity of the student.

TRUE or FALSE

10) Your job is important within the educational community.

TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER KEY

1) FALSE

2) TRUE

3) TRUE

4) FALSE

5) FALSE

6) TRUE

7) TRUE

8) FALSE

9) TRUE

10) TRUE