Welcome to the 2019-2020 School Year!

The Transportation Department is looking forward to transporting your child on the first day of school. If this is your first day with Tri County Area Schools, please know that we are excited to serve your transportation needs to and from school, as well as extracurricular activities this school year.

It is our sincere goal to transport your child(ren) to and from school in the safest and most professional manner. As a part of the educational team at Tri County Area Schools, we are committed to excellence. We appreciate your confidence and trust in our department to serve your family with safe and reliable school transportation.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Transportation Department Office at 231-937-4386.

NOTE: Please notify your child’s school office regarding any changes with your address or contact information.

- If your child will be absent from school, please let us know so we can notify the driver.
- Parents will be notified with any route changes that affect their students.

* Kindergarten and Pre-School Students:
A parent, guardian or designee must be ‘visible’ at the drop off point to receive the child.

Safety is our #1 Priority!

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE IS A PRIVILEGE
All rules apply at the designated bus stop and school loading/unloading areas.

Transportation Safety
The bus and bus stop is an extension of the school day. Any conduct detrimental to the safety of the transportation of students/staff to and from school and including school sponsored events may result in up to permanent removal from the bus.
Bus Stops Will be Limited:

- **One** morning stop and **One** afternoon stop, they may be different
- Students are only allowed to ride their assigned busses
- Bus stops do not include riding home with friends, birthday parties, sleep overs, study groups, scouting, etc.
- Students that do not ride for three (3) consecutive days **without notifying** us may be deleted from the bus run

School Bus Safety Rules:

- Arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes early
- Do not play in the street. Stand back (10 large steps away) from where the bus stops
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, has door open, and driver has given signal to enter or cross in “front” of the bus
- Hold the handrail
- Do not push or shove when boarding or exiting the bus
- Remain seated at all times and never move around while the bus is in motion
- Go straight home, do not talk to strangers
- Do not go back to the bus if you’ve forgotten something, call the bus garage and the bus driver will hold it for you
- If you must cross the street, wait for the bus driver to give you the signal before crossing
- The HORN will only be used in the case of emergency or as a warning

School Bus Code of Conduct

Any school administrator may suspend a student’s riding privileges when such action is deemed necessary. The bus driver is in charge of the students while they are on the bus and when approaching the bus stops, loading or unloading students.

Violations, which can be verbal or written, will be issued in the form of a bus citation. Continued violations may result in suspension of bus **privileges** if the behavior continues, or if the driver/transportation administrator believes actions compromise passenger or driver safety.

Minor Misconduct

Any student who is engaged in misconduct while riding on a school bus shall be promptly addressed by the bus driver/aide and warned that any continuation of the misconduct may result in further disciplinary action. (The incident shall be logged by the bus driver/aide.) Any Minor Misconduct could become a Major Misconduct with persistent, consistent non-compliance and be subject to consequences under the Major Misconduct guidelines.

The process for addressing Minor Misconduct will be:

A. Single Incident log  
B. Oral warning to student  
C. Possible temporary seat assignment

For repetitive minor infractions within the same school year, authorized district personnel shall follow the warning suspension schedule as outlined below. For bus suspension over ten (10) days, parent/guardian may require due process.
Repeated Minor Misconduct Process

Second Incident-Driver/Aide to log incident

Written warning to student

Assigned seat/parent meeting

Notice to parent for signature*

Suspension of less than ten (10) days may result in a bus behavior contract based on the discretion of the transportation department or parent request. Suspension of ten (10) or more days will require a bus behavior contract. Suspensions of ninety (90) days or more may be re-evaluated only after half of the suspension has been served. Evaluation will require a parent conference and a transportation behavior contract for the student.

Student will remain in assigned seat pending return of signed notice from parents.

Three (3) infractions = three (3) days suspension
Four (4) infractions = ten (10) days suspension
Five (5) infractions = twenty (20) days suspension
Six (6) infractions = ninety (90) days suspension
Seven (7) infractions = 180 day suspension

*Repeated minor offenses may be referred to the board of education

Major Misconduct Process

Major Misconduct is defined as an illegal or disruptive act that is detrimental to the health and safety of the driver/aide or students. Major Misconduct will include, but not be limited to: significant insubordination; persistent, consistent non-compliance; physical aggressiveness or assaultive behavior; inappropriate sexual behavior or comments; throwing objects; intimidation; assaultive or threatening actions, gross misbehavior, carrying or brandishing any real or look-a-like substances, explosives or weapons of any kind.

Any Major Misconduct will result in immediate suspension from the bus pending the investigation. If conditions warrant, a police report may be filed and possible referral to board of education. In addition, the following steps would be adhered to:

A. First infraction
   ten (10) days immediate suspension
B. Second infraction
   twenty (20) days immediate suspension

There will be a consideration of a long-term bus suspension exceeding ten (10) or twenty (20) days based on number of prior major/minor misconducts.

It is noted that due to our policy regarding violence, aggressive acts and substance abuse, the following will always be reported to the Youth Liaison Officer or Civil Authorities for possible prosecution:

A. theft of over $5.00 value
B. concealment/possession of weapons, fireworks, exploves
C. drug, alcohol, vaping, e-cigarette and tobacco use, possession, or sale
D. assaults, extortion, fighting
E. vandalism
F. harassment/intimidation (ethnic, sexual, etc)
G. arson
H. criminal sexual conduct

**Elastic Clause**

The school and administration reserve the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations for things requiring actions that are not covered in the handbook that may arise. In all cases, rules, regulations, and possible consequences shall be as consistent as possible with previously established rules, regulations, and consequences for similar incidents. Matters omitted from the final list should not be interpreted as a limitation to the scope of the school's authority in dealing with any type of infraction that may not be in the best interest of the safety and welfare of the students. The policies and regulations within this handbook apply for all school sponsored activities, including those held before or after school and those held away from Tri County Area Schools.

**DISCLAIMER:** This student handbook is composed of most of the rules and regulations that students need to know while attending Tri County Area Schools. However, it does not include every rule, regulation, qualification, or other relevant information of the district or buildings. Tri County Area Schools will not waive students' responsibilities simply because a state regulation, district, or building policy is not included in this handbook. We will make every reasonable effort possible to see that students are informed either verbally or in writing. However, it is the students' responsibility to know the rules they must abide by while at Tri County Area Schools.

Any changes made in state law, such as restorative justice practices, and/or school board policy after this handbook has gone to press may require information in the handbook to be amended. An addendum reflecting changes in policy or state law will be issued as soon as possible. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. This does not exempt students or parents from making themselves aware of and follow the rules and policies added to the student code of conduct.

**School Bus Bullying:**

**What is Bullying? How do I recognize the signs of Bullying?**

- Fear of going to school or riding the bus.
- Habitually delaying or deliberately trying to miss the bus
- Continually asking for rides to school or finding excuses to ride with friends

Students who are being bullied may not want to approach the bus driver or adults for help because of fear of being retaliated against. Adults can recognize the signs.

**What are the Different Types of Bullying?**

- **Direct** – acts of physical bullying or aggression where someone is hit, punched, kicked, stomped, beaten, stabbed or shot. It also refers to the victim being verbally teased or called with bully words or falling victim to inappropriate sexual comments or gestures.
- **Indirect** – threatening someone into social isolation. Threatening behaviors may include spreading gossip, lies, and rumors, name calling, criticizing their appearance or background, ignoring, giving the silent treatment, staring, mocking, refusing to engage or socialize, and bullying others who are trying to socialize with the victim.

- **Cyber** – bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

**Is it Bullying or Conflict? - How can I tell the difference?**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time. Both children, those who are bullied and those who bully others may have serious lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

A. **An Imbalance of Power**: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

B. **Repetition**: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

**What should I do if I believe my Child is a victim of Bullying?**

While it is understandable to want to rush into the situation and protect your child, there are steps that must be taken to prevent or stop bullying.

You should notify the Transportation Director at once.

Call (231) 937-4386 or

Email: transportation@tricountyschools.com

Again, Bullying is **NOT** tolerated on our buses.

**Helpful Hints:**

- ✓ Students should know their Name, address, phone number, teacher & bus to ride.
- ✓ One last call for bathroom break before going to the bus stop or leaving school.
- ✓ Write your child’s name on backpacks, clothing, instruments and sports equipment.
- ✓ On days you are running late, do not chase the bus, running or in your car. Call the bus garage (231) 937-4386 and we can dispatch the bus for the driver to meet you.
- ✓ If your child will be absent from school, please call the transportation office so that the driver can be notified.

Sincerely,

Director of Transportation

**Working Together to provide a Safe Ride for All Students!**

The Transportation Department would like to encourage your support in an effort to teach and promote bus safety. We are asking parents, teachers, school bus drivers and students to support our efforts by actively participating. We appreciate your time to review the safety rules, discuss them, remind students, ask questions, encourage and follow through with your actions. Together we can prevent accidents and help protect the lives of our children.