



RRPS' SCHOOL BUS "SAFETY BEGINS AT HOME" PROGRAM

The school bus is the safest and most convenient way for your child to get to and from school each day. As a matter of fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, **students are nearly eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars.**

Rio Rancho Public Schools is committed to working with parents to provide proper training as it relates to the bus. A key component of this training is the *School Bus Safety Begins at Home* program. To ensure bus rider safety on and around the school bus, student riders and their families must understand their roles when using the school bus.

On this sheet you will find answers to questions that will help families prepare their child to ride the RRPS school bus. Please refer to *the RRPS Student/Parent Transportation Handbook* for greater detail. This is available online at www.rrps.net and in your school office, school library, and community library. See <http://www.nhtsa.gov/School-Buses> for additional safety tips.

FOR YOUR CHILD:

How can my family help me to prepare for my school bus ride? Here are some important things that you need to know:

- Learn a safe walking path from your home to your bus stop and back from your stop to home. Practice walking this path several times before school begins.
- Pick a landmark that will help you easily recognize your stop, since your bus stop looks different from the bus. A tall tree, a recognizable house, or a street sign are all good landmarks.
- Talk with your family about what you should do if there is a change in your normal riding plan (for example, if you are a first grader and the person who meets you at the bus stop is not there when the bus arrives). The best way to prepare for something unexpected is to develop a back-up plan with your family.
- Review the student bus ridership responsibilities in the *RRPS Student and Parent Transportation Handbook* to make sure that you understand how to keep yourself safe on and around the bus.
- Learn your bus stop, bus number, and bus pick-up time. Your bus information will be mailed to your home address. Ask your parent or guardian to write this information on the other side of this sheet and tape this to the refrigerator.
- Buses sometimes run late, so please do not leave the stop until the bus arrives. Remember that the bus stop is the safest place to wait until the bus arrives. You can call the Transportation Department at 338-0078 if you have any questions about a late bus.

I am nervous about riding the bus. How do I know that I will be safe when I ride the bus?

- RRPS works very hard to keep you safe on the bus. Your bus driver is like your school teacher. Your bus driver is there to help you be safe when riding the bus.
- You will be assigned a seat at the beginning of the school year. You must sit in your assigned seat at all times unless your bus driver tells you otherwise. It is important to sit in your assigned seat at all times to make sure that your driver always knows where you are.
- Buses are designed with student safety as a top priority. Every bus has many built-in safety features. Video cameras are always recording students on the bus. Buses are maintained for mechanical safety and are continually monitored by our school bus safety staff. Bus drivers have radios which keep them in constant contact with RRPS, police, and other safety officials.
- Bullying or misbehavior is not tolerated on the school bus. We can help you only if you let us know there is a problem, so please tell your bus driver, teacher, principal, or parent if you need help.
- Students who misbehave on the bus will be subject to discipline, which might include short- or long-term bus suspension or removal of bus ridership privileges.

FOR YOU:

How do I prepare my child to ride the school bus? Please review with your child the points included under the "For Your Child" section. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to spend time with your child preparing them to ride the school bus.

How can my child ride the bus to school? First, you must live outside the walk boundary of the student's home school. Second, all eligible riders must be registered for transportation at the same time they register for school. A bus card or bus pass will be provided to you indicating the assigned bus number, stop, and pickup time. This must be surrendered to the driver the first time your student rides the bus.

Can my child begin riding the bus after the beginning of the school year, and can my child ride the bus occasionally? Yes, as long they are registered bus riders.

Can my child ride home with a friend or other family member on a different bus, or get off at a different stop? Children can ride to and from school only on their assigned bus from their assigned stop. This allows us to ensure that there are enough seats for all of our students. Also, since drivers become familiar with their students, this provides greater safety for the children.

Does someone need to meet my child at the bus stop? Only kindergarten students are required to have an authorized adult or family member meet the student at the bus stop each and every day. The authorized person must be indicated on the student's registration materials.

What if the authorized person cannot be present to pick up my kindergarten student? Under no circumstances will a kindergarten student be let off the bus without the authorized adult present. If they are not there, the child will be safely returned to school. If you wish to designate an alternative individual to pick up your child, you must provide the Transportation Department (338-0078) with at least a one-day advance notice. This will be strictly enforced for the safety of your child.

Do bus stops or bus pick up times ever change? Yes. Bus stops are continually monitored to ensure the safety of walk routes to the bus stop and that buses are provided in the locations of greatest student density. This is required by law. These changes sometimes result in changes to the bus pick up times.

How are we notified of these changes? You will be notified by phone, and flyers are handed out on the bus to students three days before a change is made. If your child does not always ride the bus, it is advised that you check the bus time and stop with your child's school or the Transportation Department before reestablishing bus riding.

How do I know when the bus will arrive in the afternoon? PM bus drop off times are not provided to parents since there may be some variability on the route home. However, it is very common that one or two weeks after a route is established that the drop off time becomes consistent. If you meet your child at the bus stop, it is highly advised that you arrive at the bus stop ten minutes after the school dismissal time.

What do I do if the school bus seems to be late? While we strive to establish consistent pick up and drop off times, occasionally a bus is late due to weather, road conditions, construction, student illness on the bus, or other circumstances beyond our control. If ten minutes has passed, then you may call the Transportation Department at 338-0078. If practical, an automated message will be sent to your registered telephone number informing you of the delay.

What do I do if I have a transportation concern? Under no circumstances should you try to board the bus if you have a concern. By law, only registered bus riders may board the bus; it is illegal for parents, guardians, or any other person to board a bus unless authorized by the district. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the Transportation Department (338-0078). Unless it is an emergency, please call during non-peak hours (9 am – 2 pm)

MY BUS STOP: _____

MY BUS NUMBER: _____ MY MORNING PICK UP TIME: _____

MY BUS DRIVER NAME (write in after you ride on the first day): _____