

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

## Transportation Safety

### Tips for Bus Drivers

#### ARRIVE SAFELY



#### Driver Attitude

Safety starts with a positive attitude. Your attitude can determine what kind of day you and your students have.

- Be positive. Always. Positive language and tone can create a more optimistic and encouraging atmosphere on the bus.
- Focus on the benefits of following safety procedures.
- Praising good behavior can help students feel more motivated to follow the rules.



#### Handling Stress

Stress can significantly affect people's behavior and driving. When stressed, drivers may feel exhausted, have difficulty controlling emotions, struggle to concentrate, and feel negative.

Here are some ways to handle stress :

- Take a moment to relax and mentally prepare before beginning your route.
- Keep your supervisor informed when issues arise.
- Be patient, practice self-compassion, and extend understanding and empathy toward others.
- Ask for help when needed.

#### Emergency Evacuation

Evacuating the bus during an emergency is the Driver's decision. You must evaluate where students will be the safest. If the safety threat is inside of the bus, evacuation may be the safest option. If the safety threat is outside, decide if leaving the bus is safer than remaining onboard.

- Choose a safe assembly point that is at least 100 ft from the bus.
- Call 911 and your supervisor to request emergency assistance.
- Instruct students to the safe assembly point and to wait for further instructions.
- Be attentive and aware of your surroundings. Track evacuation progress by ensuring all students have exited the bus and have made it to the assembly point.

Extreme behavior on the bus can jeopardize the safety of everyone on board. Address issues promptly to maintain a secure and orderly environment for you and the students.

## Extreme Behavior



### If students are fighting on the bus

- Bring the bus to a stop in a safe location.
- Call dispatch to report the issue.
- Remain at a safe distance, in a stern and loud voice tell the students to stop fighting.
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PHYSICALLY BREAK UP THE FIGHT!**
- If the fighting stops, instruct each student to move to opposite ends of the bus out of reach of each other.
- If the fighting does not stop call the police or dispatch and let the students know the police are on the way.

## Things to Look Out For and Avoid



- If you see anyone acting suspiciously, students with weapons, or unidentifiable strangers at a bus stop, **DO NOT STOP**, call the police or dispatch.
- If a student has a weapon on the bus, quietly and without alerting the student, call the police or dispatch. When you arrive at the school speak with school administrators and/or the SRO.
- Gang Territory- Know the gang areas you drive through. Inform the students that the bus is neutral territory and gang activity is not allowed on the bus.
- Hijacking - Immediately turn on your two-way radio or mic connected to your office. Say you have a problem as early as possible to alert dispatch. If students are on board, stay calm and follow the hijacker's instructions as best as possible to keep everyone safe.

### If Weapons Are Involved

- Do NOT-
  - Take the weapon
  - Try to overpower the student
  - Create a confrontation
- If possible separate the other students to a safe distance and wait for the police

### Reporting Abuse



As a human service worker and school staff member, School Bus Drivers are mandated reporters. Proof of neglect or abuse is not needed to make a report.

#### If you suspect neglect or child abuse you must :

- Make an oral report as soon as possible to the local\* Department of Social Services or local law enforcement and the school principal.
- Within 48 hours make a written report to the local department.

**\*Local - the jurisdiction where you believe the neglect or abuse is happening.**

**\*\* Always refer to your district's policy on who you should call first, dispatch or the police.**

# Safe Schools MD Reporting System

Anonymous reports can be submitted by...



Calling  
1-833-MD-B-SAFE



Visiting  
SafeSchoolsMD.org



Using the  
App

