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Taking Control

Discipline Strategies

Discipline on school buses is the biggest problem confronting school bus drivers. You are responsible for the conduct of your students on the bus, and the school bus is an extension of the school. Therefore, you must have the support of the school principal to effectively manage behavior on your bus.

The following strategies can help you prevent and control discipline problems on your bus:

- Do not threaten the entire bus for the transgression of a few.
- Individual behavior problems that do not affect other riders are best handled privately.
- Avoid threat or physical force.

When a discipline problem is serious:

- So not try to handle it yourself. Refer it to the school principal or your supervisor.
- Stop the bus in a safe place, stand up and speak to the offender(s) in a courteous but "I mean business" tone.
- If you must change a student's seat, move the student to a front seat near you.
- If necessary, call the principal or your supervisor. Do not start the bus until you get a response.
- If you are near the school, return to school.

When loading elementary students at the school, getting out of your seat and facing students helps maintain control and sets the tone for the ride home.

Avoid "Never Land"

There are some things you never want to do while transporting students on your bus:

- Never put a student off of your bus.
- Never lose your temper.
- Never use physical force.
- Never use profanity.

From the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW Washington DC 20001 PSRP Division "Managing Student Behavior on the

Report faults Kuna school bus driver in fatal crash

Debra Boatwright, 56, was heading east on Deer Flat road as she was taking children to school December 5th when she pulled out into the path of a dump truck, according to a report filed Monday with the Idaho Transportation Department.

The driver of the dump truck, Charles Samuel Derby, 33, was headed north on Happy Valley Road. Derby, who was not required to stop at the intersection west of Kuna, steered off the road and came back on, striking the bus near its right rear axle, according to the report.

Investigators believe Boatwright stopped at the stop sign and then pulled into the intersection in front of Derby's truck, said Teresa Baker, spokeswoman for the Idaho State Police.

Boatwright lost control of the 1998 blue Bird bus and spun around. The left rear wheel of the bus struck a stop sign and street sign on the northeast corner of the intersection before stopping, the report said.

Eleven-year old Daniel Cook, a student at Crimson Point elementary School, was killed by the impact. He was sitting in the 11th row of the passenger side of the bus, near where the bus was struck. At least three of the four children who were hospitalized following the crash were seated near Cook.

Twelve students between the ages of 5 and 11 were on the bus at the time of the accident.

STAY ALERT / SAFETY FIRST

If you have any ideas or recent projects you would like to share, please contact Kim Comet at kcomet@humboldt.k12.ca.us or (707) 445-7067

If you do not wish to receive the Safety Zone, please send an email to kcomet@humboldt.k12.ca.us with your name and district.

Safety ZONE

NEWSLETTER FOR BUS DRIVERS



Volume 13, Number 2

Managing Student Behavior on the School Bus

SCHOOL BUSES ARE THE SAFEST FORM OF MASS TRANSIT IN AMERICA.

Every day, school buses travel through congested city traffic and on isolated country roads in all types of weather, safely transporting millions of children to and from school and school-related activities. Federal and state standards for school bus construction and maintenance and highly trained drivers are essential elements that make school bus travel safe. A third and equally important factor is student behavior on the bus. A well-trained school bus driver can safely operate a sub and effectively manage student behavior.

A school bus is like a classroom. Just as a teacher is in charge of what happens in the classroom, the bus driver is in charge of what happens on the school bus. Safely transporting students requires appropriate student behavior.

Managing Behavior

Acceptable and unacceptable behavior must be clearly spelled out, including consequences for unacceptable behavior. Inappropriate behavior on a school bus can have potentially fatal consequences. For example, when the driver looks into the rearview mirror to identify and correct student behavior, who is driving the bus? Safe and appropriate behavior is the expectation, and nothing less should be acceptable.

Ideally, managing or controlling student behavior on the school bus is a team effort involving the driver, principal and parents. The goals are to ensure a safe ride to and from school and to help school children develop appropriate behavior over the long haul. We can influence a student's behavior by how we respond to it. Three strategies to accomplish this are positive reinforcement, extinction and punishment.

IN-SERVICE CLASSES

Original/Renewal Classes Available

Contact your state certified or delegated trainers for additional training dates and activities

Northern Humboldt Union	Sarah Goodwin (707) 825-2434
Arcata	Carol Grimes (707) 822-2614
Fortuna High School	Barbara Lake (707) 752-4461 ext 3097
Del Norte Unified	Linda Horton (707) 464-0250
Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified	Tiffany James (530) 625-5600 ext 2404
Humboldt County Office of Ed.	Tom McGinnis (707) 445-7089
McKinleyville Union	Scott Oilar (707) 839-2584
Eureka City Schools	Linda Wilson (707) 441-2503

DTAC – Driver Trainers Advisory Committee

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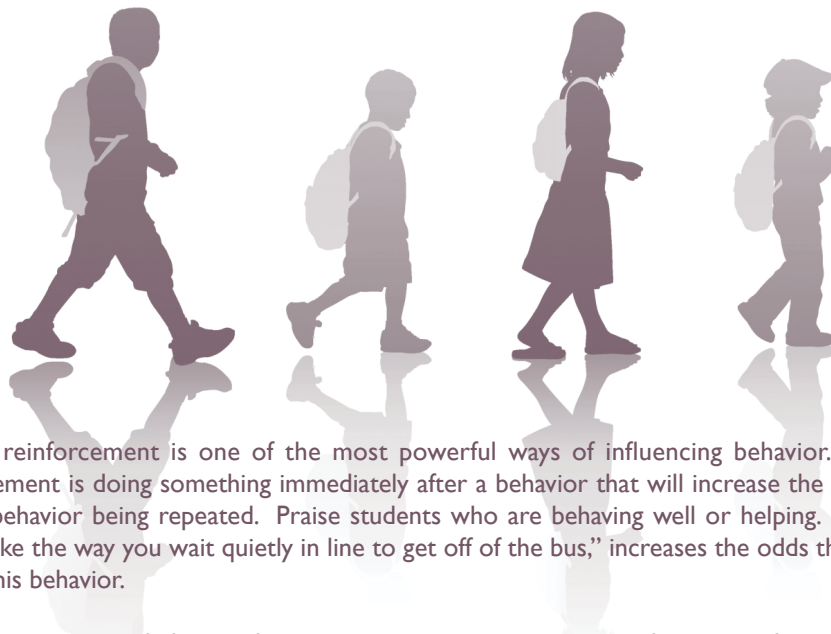
Linda Wilson
Eureka City Schools

Printed by the Humboldt
County Office of Education
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Risk Manager

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Positive reinforcement is one of the most powerful ways of influencing behavior. Positive reinforcement is doing something immediately after a behavior that will increase the likelihood of that behavior being repeated. Praise students who are behaving well or helping. Saying to John, “I like the way you wait quietly in line to get off of the bus,” increases the odds that he will repeat this behavior.

Extinction is ignoring behavior that is annoying or attention-getting, but is not dangerous. The rationale behind extinction is that by consistently ongoing the behavior, it will cease. Dangerous behavior should never be ignored. If there is dangerous behavior on the bus, the best recourse is to pull over and call for help – via two-way radio or cell phone to the bus depot, or even by yelling for assistance from the window. If necessary, you may need to get other students away from the offender. This is a very good reason to practice emergency bus evacuation procedures, which all districts should have in place as part of their emergency plans.

Punishment is a penalty imposed for wrongdoing which usually causes a behavior to lessen or cease. Reprimands, denying privileges, sending a student to the back of the line and suspension from the bus are forms of punishment. Using punishment can cause some students to retaliate against the driver or continue their misbehavior. There for, punishment is not the best way to correct behavior. However, punishment can work when it is part of a behavior management plan that spells out the consequence for inappropriate behavior or for behavior infractions.

Why Do You Need Rules?

For students, riding the school bus is a privilege that is contingent upon their continuous observance of bus rules and established regulations.

- Rules establish expectations for acceptable behavior and safety on the school bus.
- Many of the rules that students observe on the school bus are the same rules they follow in school.
- Rules should be reviewed with students on the first day of school and routinely throughout the year.
- Rules should be simple, realistic, and enforceable, and should be posted where everyone can see them.
- Rules should be short and stated positively to promote good behavior.
- Enforce the rules consistently and equitably. Be sure your students know and understand each rule.
- Students should take a copy of the rules home to be reviewed with parents, signed and returned.

Expect safe behavior and accept nothing less.

Communication is Key

When you are speaking to students, there are two forms of communications you can use. They are alpha and beta commands.

Alpha commands are clear, concrete and specific, and allow a reasonable time for behavior to occur: “John, sit in your seat on the count of three!”

Beta commands are vague and wordy, containing too many directives and not enough time for compliance: “John, sit down right now! Why don’t you behave like everyone else? Don’t say anything and look straight ahead! You just won’t be obedient. Come up here and sit near me!” Beta commands are typically used when people feel frustrated and angry. Beta commands should especially be avoided when communicating with students who have problems complying with directions.

Setting the Tone

Prevention Strategies

You set the tone for your bus much the same way that teachers set the tone for their classrooms.

Many students bring baggage other than their backpacks when they board the bus in the morning or head home after a long day. Both are opportunities for inappropriate behavior, but the tone of your bus could make the difference.

Here are some strategies:

- Greet every student boarding your bus every day.
- Get to know students’ names as soon as possible.
- Set an example of courtesy and friendliness.

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In each issue, we will highlight one of our own drivers and their accomplishments.

Bus Driver – Rich Moxon

Rich Moxon is very proud of Pacific Union and shows that pride in all areas of his work here. Driving our busses is only one of Rich’s many jobs at school. He is in charge of all aspects of maintenance and upkeep of the facilities and equipment. He possesses considerable technical knowledge and abilities required to maintain the various electrical, sanitation, plumbing and heating systems. He is a skilled problem solver and can fix almost anything. He is mindful of the economy of repairs without compromising quality. He communicates maintenance and safety issues daily and works with administration to develop long-range maintenance goals and plans. He also assists on the safety team and has significant roles in our disaster preparedness activities.

In his role as bus driver, it is safety first. He is an excellent driver and makes sure students know and follow safety rules as passengers. He takes students through bus evacuation drills early in the year and teaches new riders about bus rules. He knows all the students on his busses and makes sure they leave the bus to an authorized adult or safe location. He completes all local California Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation documentation required of school bus drivers. He also attends continuing education for bus drivers and maintains his first aid and CPR certifications.

Rich not only gives much of himself to our school, but to the larger community. He owns and operates a ranch and is generous loaning tools and large equipment to the school for unique or big jobs. He uses his own stock truck to haul large pieces of furniture or equipment for the school. He hosts and covers most of the costs of a monthly barbecue at school during staff lunch periods. He is a member of Mad River Rotary Club and has served as past president. His club built and donated picnic tables for our junior high, friendship square, garden and daycare areas. Rich is a skilled craftsman and makes elaborate furniture and miniatures for the Rotary auction annually.

Rich is an invaluable employee of Pacific Union with an expert and varied set of skills. We are proud of his honor by the California Highway Patrol on his safe driving record.