
Procedure Section:	Transportation
Procedure Title:	Transportation Loading and Unloading
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More students are killed while getting on or off a school bus each year than are killed as passengers inside of a school bus. As a result, knowing what to do before, during, and after loading or unloading students is critical.

Approaching Stop

- Approach cautiously at a slow rate of speed.
- Look for pedestrians, traffic, or other objects before, during, and after coming to a stop.
- Continuously check all mirrors.
- Turn on/activate the overhead lights well in advance (as an example, just before you remove your foot from the gas pedal) or at a minimum of about one hundred to three hundred (100-300) feet / thirty to ninety (30-90) metres, or approximately three to five (3-5) seconds before stop.
- Continuously check mirrors to monitor the danger zones for students, traffic, and other objects.
- Keep to the centre of your lane wherever possible.
- Bring school bus to a full stop with the front bumper at least three (3) metres / ten (10) feet away from students at the designated stop. This forces the students to walk to the bus, so you have a better view of their movements.
- Open service door, if possible, enough to activate alternating red lights when traffic is a safe distance from the school bus.

Make a final check to see that all traffic has stopped before completely opening the door and extending the stop arm and when safe to do so, signal students to approach.

Loading Procedures

- Students should wait in a designated location for the school bus, facing the bus as it approaches.
- Students should board the bus only when signalled by the driver.
- Monitor all mirrors continuously.

- Count the number of students at the bus stop and be sure all board the bus. If possible, the driver should know names of students at each stop. If there is a student missing, ask the other students where the student is.
- Have the students board the bus slowly, in single file, and use the handrail. The dome light should be on while loading in the dark.
- Wait until students are seated and facing forward before moving the bus.
- Check all mirrors. Make certain no one is running to catch the bus.
- If the driver cannot account for a student outside, secure the bus, take the key, and check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave by:
 - closing the door;
 - engaging the transmission;
 - releasing the parking brake;
 - turning off alternating flashing red lights;
 - checking all mirrors again;
 - allowing oncoming congested traffic to disperse.
- When it is safe, move the bus, and continue the route.

The loading procedure is essentially the same wherever the driver loads students, but there are slight differences. When students are loading at the school, the driver should:

- turn off the ignition switch;
- remove key if leaving driver's compartment;
- be in a position to supervise loading as required;
- depart from the school when signalled by the loading supervisor or when departure time has elapsed.

Unloading Procedure

- Have the students remain seated until told to exit.
- Check all mirrors.
- Count the number of students while unloading to confirm the location of all students before pulling away from the stop.
- Tell students to exit the bus and walk at least three (3) metres / ten (10) feet away from the side of the bus to a position where the driver can plainly see all students.
- Check all mirrors again. Make sure no students are around or returning to the bus.
- If the driver cannot account for a student outside the bus, secure the bus, remove the key, and check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave by:

- closing the door;
 - engaging transmission;
 - releasing parking brake;
 - turning off alternating flashing red lights;
 - checking all mirrors again;
 - allowing oncoming congested traffic to disperse.
- When it is safe, move the bus, and continue the route.

Note: If the driver has missed a student's unloading stop, they do not back up. They must notify their dispatcher, complete the route and then return to the original designated stop or if practical to go around the block to discharge the student.

Student Crossing Road Procedure

Morning Pick Up

- Stop and look in all directions, making sure the roadway is clear and is safe.
- Check to see if the red flashing lights on the bus are still flashing and stop arm is extended.
- Wait for driver's signal before crossing the roadway.

Upon driver's signal, the students should:

- Look for traffic in both directions, making sure roadway is clear and traffic has stopped.
- Proceed across the roadway, continuing to look in all directions.
- Cross far enough in front of the bus to be in driver's view, at end of cross arm.
- Stop at the right hand side of the bus, stop, and look again for potential traffic passing on the right hand side of the bus.
- Proceed onto bus in single file.

Afternoon Drop Off

- Unload from the bus when the driver opens the door, in single file.
- Before exiting the vehicle, check for traffic.
- Proceed to the front of the bus staying on the right-hand side of the road to the end of the cross arm.
- Check to see if the red flashing lights on the bus are still activated and the stop arm is extended.
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing the roadway.

Upon driver's signal, the students should:

- Cross far enough in front of the bus to be in the driver's view at all times.
- Walk to the middle of the road or edge of left side of the bus and stop.
- Look for traffic in both directions, making sure roadway is clear and traffic has stopped.
- Proceed across the roadway, continuing to look in all directions.

Special Dangers

Dropped or Forgotten Objects

Drivers should always focus on students as they approach/leave the bus and watch for any who disappear from sight.

Students may drop an object near the bus during loading and unloading. Stopping to pick up the object, or returning to pick up the object, may cause the student to disappear from the driver's sight at a very dangerous moment.

Students should be told to leave any dropped object and move to a point of safety out of the danger zones and attempt to get the driver's attention to retrieve the object or upon drop off retrieve after the vehicle has left with the assistance of a parent/guardian.

Handrail Hang Ups

Students have been injured or killed when clothing, accessories, or even parts of their body get caught in the handrail or door as they exited the vehicle. The driver should closely observe all students exiting the vehicle to confirm that they are in a safe location prior to closing the doors and moving the vehicle.

Related RCJTC Policy

P.01 Transportation Policy

P.03 Safety Policy

Related RCJTC Administrative Procedures

AP.03.05 School Bus Danger Zone

Related RCJTC Forms