



**PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION RIDER AGREEMENT**

The Portsmouth School Department, in conjunction with its pupil transportation providers, endeavors to promote a safe and pleasant bus-riding environment for our passengers and drivers. In order for this to happen, the students must act in a responsible and well-behaved manner at all times. The driver must be able to expect that students will observe the proper riding behavior with minimum supervision in order to operate the bus on our streets and roads and deliver these students safely to their destinations.

A committee of interested parents, administrators, bus company officials, and Board of Education members all agree that the *Bus Rider Rules*, *Bus Rider Disciplinary Policy*, *Bus Provider and School Commitments*, and *Parental Concerns Resolution Process* must be clearly communicated to all student riders and their parents or guardians.

This committee believes that the most effective way to do this is in the form of a bus rider agreement. This agreement would be treated as a contract between the School, the parents (guardian) and, most importantly, the rider.

Please take the time to look over all parts of this agreement, sign and return a copy to your school office.

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

BUS RIDER AND PARENT COMMITMENT

I have read and I understand the **Pupil Transportation Rider Agreement** including the *Bus Rider Rules*, *Bus Rider Disciplinary Policy*, *Bus Provider and School Commitments*, and *Parent Complaint Procedures* and agree to the best of my ability to abide by them.

Parent (Print Name)

Student (Print Name)

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Date

Date

Year of Graduation

BUS RIDER RULES

In general, we expect students, while riding the bus, to behave as they would in the classroom with their teacher or at home with their parents. Specifically, all students who ride Portsmouth School Department school buses:

At Bus Stops, Students should ...

1. Wait and ride only if approved by the school
2. Be orderly and avoid horseplay
3. Arrive at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive
4. Wait clear of traffic and back as far as possible from the road
5. Wait to approach only after the bus has stopped
6. Cross the street only after the driver has put on the flashing lights and signaled to cross
7. Only get on and off at their own stops.

Once on the Bus, Students should ...

1. Go directly to an available seat or assigned seat
2. Remain seated during the bus ride
3. Keep hands, heads, arms, and legs inside
4. Never play with emergency exit equipment
5. Never throw or pass around any object(s)
6. Not carry on live animals of any kind
7. Carry on only items which they can hold on their laps
8. Not eat or drink food items

For the Driver to Keep Attention to the Bus Operation and the Traffic, Students must.....

1. Not carry on hazardous materials, or use nuisance items, such as laser lights, etc.
2. Not have or carry on weapons of any kind
3. Not use or be carrying tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, or any other controlled substance
4. Not use profanity or make obscene gestures
5. Observe all other school rules (printed in the student handbooks or developed by school administration) and district-wide policies
6. Show respect for the driver and other students

BUS RIDER DISCIPLINE POLICY

Any bus rider who does not follow the rules established to provide for a safe and pleasant bus ride will be subject to the following disciplinary procedure. It is intended that this procedure start simply between the driver and the student but can progress to school administration and result in the loss of riding privileges.

Informal (Verbal): Driver and Rider

1. The driver will speak with the student about the undesirable behavior.
2. The driver may assign a seat or restrict the student from sitting in a specific area of the bus for a period of time as determined by the driver.

3. Should the student continue to violate the rules, the driver will submit a written report to the transportation supervisor. Upon review of the report, the transportation supervisor may forward it to the building principal where the child attends school.

Formal (Written): Bus Provider, School Administration, Parent and Rider (When the informal no longer is working)

1. First Report - The student will meet with the Principal, and a copy of the report will be mailed home.
2. Second Report - The student will meet with the Principal to discuss a plan of improvement and consequences which could include up to a five (5) day dismissal from the bus. Parent(s) will receive a copy of the report following the meeting.
3. Third Report - The student will meet with the Principal and the parent will be notified. A probable five (5) day dismissal and possibly the extended loss of bus privilege will occur. A copy of the report and a letter of bus privilege dismissal will be delivered to the parent.

Extended Suspension of Riding Privileges: School Administrator, Parent and Rider

After the failure of the informal and formal discipline above, a student rider may lose riding privileges for an extended period of time. This decision will be made by school administration after due process with the student and parent.

Any extended suspension must be in compliance with RSA 189:9a which includes due process and Board approval.

BUS PROVIDER AND SCHOOL COMMITMENTS

Bus Provider Commitment to a Safe and Pleasant Bus Ride:

The bus company will provide equipment and drivers who meet or exceed Federal Motor Safety Regulations. All new drivers graduate from our 30 hour safety program which covers all state requirements of school bus operators as well as providing additional safety training which meets STA's strict safety policies. Our drivers are required to attend 8 hours of additional safety training annually, which exceeds the state requirements. Our drivers will operate their vehicles in a safe, lawful, and professional manner.

The bus driver shall instruct the students in safe riding and pedestrian practices as follows:

1. Safe walking practices to and from the bus stop. Procedures to deal with strangers while walking to and at the bus stop.
2. Wearing of light-colored or reflective clothing if going to and from the bus stop in darkness or on an overcast/rainy day.
3. How and where to wait safely for the bus.
4. Safe roadway crossing before boarding or leaving the bus.
5. Problems with clothing, backpacks, and the dangers of getting them caught when departing the bus (remove drawstrings from clothing and excess straps from backpacks).
6. What to do if the bus is late or does not arrive.
7. Emergency evacuation procedures.

Portsmouth School Department Commitment to a Safe and Pleasant Bus Ride:

The Portsmouth School Department:

1. Insists student safety while riding the buses must come first
2. Believes the most important job of the bus driver is to operate the bus in a safe and prudent manner
3. Will not tolerate rider behavior which jeopardizes safe operation of the school bus
4. Requires its administration to work with the bus drivers and bus company officials to ensure the safe operation of the school bus
5. Considers the bus company and its personnel to be an extension of the school's own personnel
6. Considers students who are on the bus are the responsibility of the Portsmouth School Department
7. Believes that all of its students and employees should be treated with respect and dignity
8. Will make every effort to resolve rider or parent concerns in a fair manner to all

PARENTAL CONCERNS RESOLUTION PROCESS

How parents (guardians) can get help when they are experiencing a problem with their child's bus ride or with a bus driver:

- 1) **Talk to the bus company officials first.** Because of time and scheduling, the driver cannot take the time while completing his/her driving responsibilities, so a phone call directly to the bus company supervisor is recommended:

Student Transportation of America	433-1761	Ask for the Supervisor
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The bus company representative will make every effort to listen, explain, and generally try to resolve your concerns.

- 2) **If you do not feel successful in talking with the bus company,** please contact the school principal to see if he/she can help you. In most cases a principal can provide assistance and guidance in working out unresolved bus issues.

If further assistance is required, please request a meeting at your child's school with the principal and a bus company supervisor.

- 3) **If a problem continues past this point,** you can request that Central Office review the situation by calling the Superintendent's Office, (603) 431-5080, and ask for the Business Administrator. If unavailable, the Superintendent may be reached at the above referenced number.

The Board of Education can also be informed through written or personal communications from a parent. It must be said, however, that all other efforts should be exhausted before taking this step as it would otherwise be the Board's policy to refer this matter back to administration unless all steps have failed.