

# **Pupil Transportation Safety Instruction**

**GaDOE Health and Safety Curriculum**

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## Background

Georgia fatalities and serious injuries continue to occur at school bus stops, caused by a variety of circumstances and errors on the part of the student, the school bus driver and the passing motorist. **Between 2010 and 2020 school years, Georgia experienced a total of 15 student school bus stop fatalities, several serious injuries and numerous near misses when students were getting on and off the school bus.** In 2023 alone, we had two children killed in bus stop related accidents. One chasing after a bus they thought was their bus and that they had missed it. The other while waiting for the bus the school bus early morning. These tragic events point out the need to look at ways to reduce the possibility of similar tragedies ever happening again.

Recent national and Georgia statistics show the need for students to be trained on the proper procedures for loading and unloading. You can play an important role in the delivery of essential school bus safety training to our student riders.

Classes receiving the instruction will be composed of those who ride the bus to and from school and others who may ride infrequently or who ride only on field trips. **This instruction is for everyone.** Students not currently riding the bus to and from school may ride the bus in future years or at future schools attended. Additionally, all students will be a bus rider when on field trips where the Danger Zone training, safe riding practices and emergency evacuation training is highly relevant.

The school bus safety training provided to students should be developmentally appropriate and is an integral part of the Health and Safety Curriculum. It is recommended that the required school bus transportation safety training be provided within the first twenty school days of both the first and second semester. There is also the opportunity to reinforce training during National School Bus Safety Week.

1. Safety procedures while waiting at school bus stops;  
2. Recognition of the danger zones are limited to the following topics:

3. Safety procedures for loading and unloading the school bus;
4. Safety procedures for crossing the road to and from the school bus and school bus stop;
5. Safety procedures for unloading and loading the school bus at school;
6. Safe school bus riding practices; and
7. Emergency school bus evacuation procedures.

**NOTE** – Instructional items marked with “\*\*” indicate a history of severe student injury or student death in Georgia and *blue italic text provides further instructional detail*. These are essential high priority safe behaviors that must be taught to ensure student safety.

## School Bus Stop Safety

There are serious safety issues for students while waiting at the school bus stop. Students are responsible for their actions and behavior while waiting at the school bus stop. School bus transportation can be denied if students do not conduct themselves properly. The following are essential behaviors for student safety **while at the school bus stop. Students should:**

1. Get up and get ready on time. **\*\*Arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the bus is scheduled to come.** *Students have been struck by their school bus when they arrived late in the boarding process and the bus driver was unaware of their presence. The five minute target ensures the loading of the bus takes place in a routine manner, even if the student is running a couple of minutes late or the bus is running a couple of minutes early. Any break in the normal safety routine places the student in grave danger.*
2. **\*\*Go back home and get help or phone for assistance if you miss the bus.** Get someone you know to take you to school. NEVER chase after the bus, NEVER walk to another bus stop and tell your parents to NEVER drive you to another bus stop. Your bus driver will not be expecting you and you will be in grave danger when approaching the unsuspecting school bus driver. It is better to be late for school and be safe! *Students have been struck by vehicles or by their school bus when they missed their bus and tried to board a school bus at an unscheduled stop. Any break in the normal safety routine places the student in grave danger.*
3. **\*\*Have all items in your book bag before you leave home so you don't drop anything.** *Students have been struck by other vehicles when they dropped something and went after it at the bus stop or struck by their school bus when they dropped something and tried to retrieve it when getting onto the bus.*
4. **\*\*Wait in a safe place, 12 feet away from traffic.** *Students have been struck by passing vehicles at the bus stop when they got too close to traffic.*
5. Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the car with a stranger. Tell your bus driver, your teacher or your parents if a stranger tries to talk to you or pick you up.
6. Respect the property of home owners at the bus stop and also keep the noise down.
7. Respect the rights and safety of other students.
8. Wait in a "single file" line or in an orderly group.
9. Avoid horseplay.
10. Refrain from pushing or shoving.
11. Form an orderly line as the bus approaches, with the 1<sup>st</sup> student in line standing 12 feet away from the road.
12. Keep electronic equipment packed away when preparing to board. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds/headphones when boarding. You MUST be able to hear!
13. Wait before moving to the school bus.

## **Loading & Unloading, Crossing the Road and the School Bus Danger Zone**

Getting on and getting off a school bus are absolutely the most dangerous activities that a student performs daily. The National Safety Council estimates that 80-85 percent of all accidents in the field of pupil transportation occur at the time students are being loaded and unloaded. In recent years, sixty percent (60%) of the pupils fatally injured in the loading and unloading zones were killed by their own bus. Recent national and Georgia statistics show the need for students to be trained on the proper procedures for loading and unloading. You can play an important role in the delivery of essential school bus safety training to our student riders.

Due to the high frequency of student injuries and deaths occurring at school bus stops, the following **loading and unloading universal principles** must be stressed:

1. **\*\***Students should be taught, that they should never return to the bus for something they left behind or for something they dropped without getting the attention of their bus driver. They should leave any object and move to a point out of the danger zone. They should then get the driver's attention by putting their hands and arms above their head and waving to the bus driver. They should wait for the driver to see them and give them instruction before returning to the bus or before picking anything up near the bus. If they do not get the attention of the driver, they should not attempt to retrieve the item.

*Students have been struck by their school bus when they left something on the bus and tried to return or dropped something and went after it. There are areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see a student (the danger zone) and there is the potential that the bus driver may not see a student and begin to move the bus.*

2. **\*\***Students should be taught the importance of their bus driver being able to see them at all times when outside the bus. Teach "If I see the driver, the driver sees me". *Students have been struck by their school bus when they entered areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see them (the danger zone) and the bus driver began to move the bus.*

3. **\*\***Students should be trained to wait 12 feet away from the road and to stay away from the 12 foot school bus danger zone. See the following safety training diagrams that make several references to 12 foot distance:

- a. *School Bus Danger Zone*
- b. *How to Get ON the School Bus Safely if NOT Required to Cross the Road*
- c. *How to Get ON the School Bus Safely if REQUIRED to Cross the Road*
- d. *Safe Student Behaviors if NOT Required to Cross Road AFTER EXITING the Bus*
- e. *Safe Student Behaviors if REQUIRED TO CROSS Road AFTER EXITING the Bus*

*Students have been struck by passing cars and by their school bus. This benchmark distance has evolved from lesser distances to the current 12 feet. It is essential for students to be well away from traffic when waiting at bus stops and well away from their school bus as they begin to board, when loading/unloading and as they complete their exit.*

In order to train students to understand, remember and practice the 12 foot minimum walk distance, one or more of the following instructional methods should be used:

- a. Mark the 12 foot distance on the ground and have each student, in normal or giant steps, walk off the distance and count the steps. The student's total steps shall be recorded and the student should be informed and repeatedly reminded of this total number of steps required for safety when waiting for and getting on and off the school bus.
  - b. Simulate having each student practice walking 12 feet away from the bus (for those who do not cross) or 12 feet ahead of the bus on the right shoulder of the road (for those who cross) until the student can clearly see the bus driver's eyes.
4. \*\*Students should be taught that approaching vehicles are a danger to them when loading or unloading. The school bus stop arm is asking the cars to stop, but they may or may not stop. Students must continuously be looking for the danger of moving vehicles as they board and as they leave the school bus. They should always assume that an approaching vehicle will not stop. *This is one of the most dangerous places on earth – a public roadway. Students have been struck by approaching vehicles from either direction that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm or who lost control as they tried to stop.*
5. \*\*Students should be trained that the signal for danger is a continuous blowing of the school bus horn and it means danger is present and they should look for dangerous vehicles and stay clear of the hazard – either stopping from entering the roadway or rapidly clearing the roadway. *Students have been struck by vehicles when outside the school bus. If the bus driver sees a danger they will sound the horn to alert the student to quickly find the danger and safely react.*

There are specific safe student behaviors that can greatly enhance the safety of students when loading or unloading a school bus. It is essential that a student have the knowledge of those safe behaviors so they can be executed every day, over and over, until they become a habit.

1. When **LOADING** from the door side of the road (**not required to cross**) you should:
  - a. \*\*Stay on your side of the road until the bus comes. *Students have been struck by vehicles when they were unnecessarily crossing the road before the bus comes. They might be going across the road to visit, going to a store that is across the road, etc.*
  - b. \*\*Stay at least 12 feet away from the edge of the road. *Students have been struck by passing vehicles at the bus stop when they got too close to traffic.*
  - c. Form an orderly line as the bus approaches, with the 1<sup>st</sup> student in line standing 12 feet away from where the bus will stop.
  - d. Wait for the bus to stop and for the door to open.
  - e. \*\*Never step towards the bus until **YOU** look to be sure all traffic has stopped. Do not assume that approaching cars will stop. If you see a car moving, do not move forward until it has stopped. When it is OK . . . *Students have been struck by approaching vehicles from either direction that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm or who lost control as they tried to stop.*
  - f. \*\*Continue to look for moving cars as you walk straight towards the door. *(see "e.")*
  - g. \*\*Be sure the bus driver can see you. The driver is trying to count passengers as they approach the bus and count them again as they enter the bus. *Students have been struck by their school bus when they entered areas around the bus where it is*

*hard for the driver to see them (the danger zone) and the bus driver began to move the bus.*

- h. \*\*Stay away from the front and rear bus tires and board the bus without delay. (*see "g."*)
- i. Load in an orderly manner.
- j. Use the hand rail when entering the bus.
- k. Go directly to your seat.

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:**

- ***School Bus Danger Zone*** – (See diagram/information that follows)
- ***How to Get ON the School Bus Safely If NOT Required to Cross the Road*** (See diagram/information that follows)

#### **2. When **LOADING** from the opposite side of the road (**required to cross**) you should:**

- a. \*\*Stay on your side of the road until the bus comes. *Students have been struck by vehicles when they were unnecessarily crossing the road before the bus comes. They might be going to their bus stop on the other side of the road, going across the road to visit, going to a store that is across the road, etc.*
- b. \*\*Stay at least 12 feet away from the edge of the road. *Students have been struck by passing vehicles at the bus stop when they got too close to traffic.*
- c. Form an orderly line as the bus approaches, with the 1<sup>st</sup> student in line standing 12 feet away from the edge of the road.
- d. Wait for the bus to stop and for the stop arm to be extended.
- e. \*\*Make eye contact with the bus driver. Never step towards the bus until the bus driver signals that it is safe to cross. When they signal, look for moving cars as you begin to walk. *Students have been struck by approaching vehicles from either direction that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm or who lost control as they tried to stop.*
- f. \*\*Stop at the edge of the road so you have a clear view of any moving cars in both directions. **YOU** must look left, right, and left again. Do not assume that approaching cars will stop. If you see a car moving, do not step into the road. When it is OK . . . (*see "e."*)
- g. \*\*Continue to look for moving cars as you walk straight across the road. (*see "e."*)
- h. \*\*Cross 12 feet in front of the bus and be sure your bus driver can see you. The driver is trying to count passengers as they approach the bus and count them again as they enter the bus. *Students have been struck by their school bus when they entered areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see them (the danger zone) and the bus driver began to move the bus.*
- i. \*\*Look for moving cars, be careful in the danger zone and board the bus without delay. (*see "e." & "h."*)
- j. Load in an orderly manner.
- k. Use the hand rail when entering the bus.
- l. Go directly to your seat.

### SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:

- **School Bus Danger Zone** – (See diagram/information that follows)
- **How to Get ON the School Bus Safely If REQUIRED to Cross the Road** – (See diagram/information that follows)

### 3. When **UNLOADING** to the door side of the road (**not required to cross**) you should:

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Put away any electronic equipment before standing to exit the bus. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds/headphones until you are safely 12 feet off the roadway. *Students need to be fully focused as they exit and they need to be able to hear a blowing horn, etc.*
- Unload in an orderly manner.
- Wait in the aisle for the driver to give you the OK to begin to exit. They are waiting for all cars to stop before letting you off the bus.
- \*\*YOU** must look for newly approaching cars in all directions (especially to your right), before you leave the bus. Do not assume they will stop. If you see a car moving, wait for it to stop. When it is OK . . . *Students have been struck by vehicles on the right side of the school bus when exiting. These could be vehicles that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm, but it has mostly been vehicles that lost control when trying to stop.*
- Use the hand rail when exiting the bus.
- \*\*Check** for your book bag straps, purses, clothing drawstrings, etc. to make sure they do not get caught on the handrail or in the door. *Students have been injured by the moving bus when something they were wearing or carrying got caught in the handrail or caught in the closed bus door as they exited. If this occurs with earlier exiting students it is more easily identified by the school bus driver, but the greatest danger is for the last student exiting the bus. It becomes even more of a problem if the student exits and walks towards the rear of the bus out of direct view of the driver.*
- \*\*Leave** the bus and continue to look for moving cars as you . . . *Students have been struck by approaching vehicles from either direction that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm or who lost control as they tried to stop.*
- Walk directly away from the bus in a straight line, in full view of your driver. The driver is trying to count passengers as they exit the bus and count them again as they move away. *Students have been struck by their school bus when they entered areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see them (the danger zone) and the bus driver began to move the bus.*
- \*\*Keep** walking until you get 12 feet away from the right side of the bus (out of the danger zone and away from the danger of passing cars). (*see "g." & "h."*)
- Never get mail from a roadside mailbox.



#### SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:

- **School Bus Danger Zone** – (See diagram/information that follows)
- **Safe Student Behaviors if NOT Required to Cross Road AFTER EXITING the Bus** – (See diagram/information that follows)

#### 4. When **UNLOADING** to the opposite side of the road (**required to cross**) you should:

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Put away any electronic equipment before standing to exit the bus. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds/headphones until you are safely 12 feet off the roadway. *Students need to be fully focused as they exit and they need to be able to hear a blowing horn, etc.*
- Unload in an orderly manner.
- Wait in the aisle for the driver to give you the OK to begin to exit. They are waiting for all cars to stop before letting you off the bus.
- \*\*YOU** must look for newly approaching cars in all directions (especially to your right), before you leave the bus. Do not assume they will stop. If you see a car moving, wait for it to stop. When it is OK . . . *Students have been struck by vehicles on the right side of the school bus when exiting. These could be vehicles that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm, but it has mostly been vehicles that lost control when trying to stop.*
- Use the hand rail when exiting the bus.
- \*\*Check** for your book bag straps, purses, clothing drawstrings, etc. to make sure they do not get caught on the handrail or in the door. *Students have been injured by the moving bus when something they were wearing or carrying got caught in the handrail or caught in the closed bus door as they exited. If this occurs with earlier exiting students it is more easily identified by the school bus driver, but the greatest danger is for the last student exiting the bus. It becomes even more of a problem if the student exits and walks towards the rear of the bus out of direct view of the driver.*
- \*\*Leave** the bus and continue to look for moving cars as you . . . *Students have been struck by approaching vehicles from either direction that chose not to stop for the school bus stop arm or who lost control as they tried to stop.*
- \*\*Walk** directly away from the right front of the bus until you get past the end of the bus crossing gate on the right side of the roadway. Stay in full view of your driver since they are trying to count passengers as they exit the bus and count them again as they move away. Be careful in the danger zone. *Students have been struck by their school bus when they entered areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see them (the danger zone) and the bus driver began to move the bus.*
- \*\*Turn** and face the center of the road and stop. Look both ways for moving cars. Make eye contact with your bus driver and wait for them to signal when it is safe to cross to the center line. Look in all directions for approaching traffic as you walk to the center of the road. *(see “g.”)*
- \*\*Stop** there so you now have a clear view of your bus driver and look both ways for moving cars. Make eye contact with your bus driver and wait for them to give you a

second signal when it is safe to finish crossing the road. If you see a car moving, wait for it to stop. When it is OK . . . (see "g.")

l. **\*\* YOU** must continue to look left, right, and left for moving cars as you quickly walk straight across and exit to a point 12 feet off of the road (away from the danger of passing cars). (see "g.")

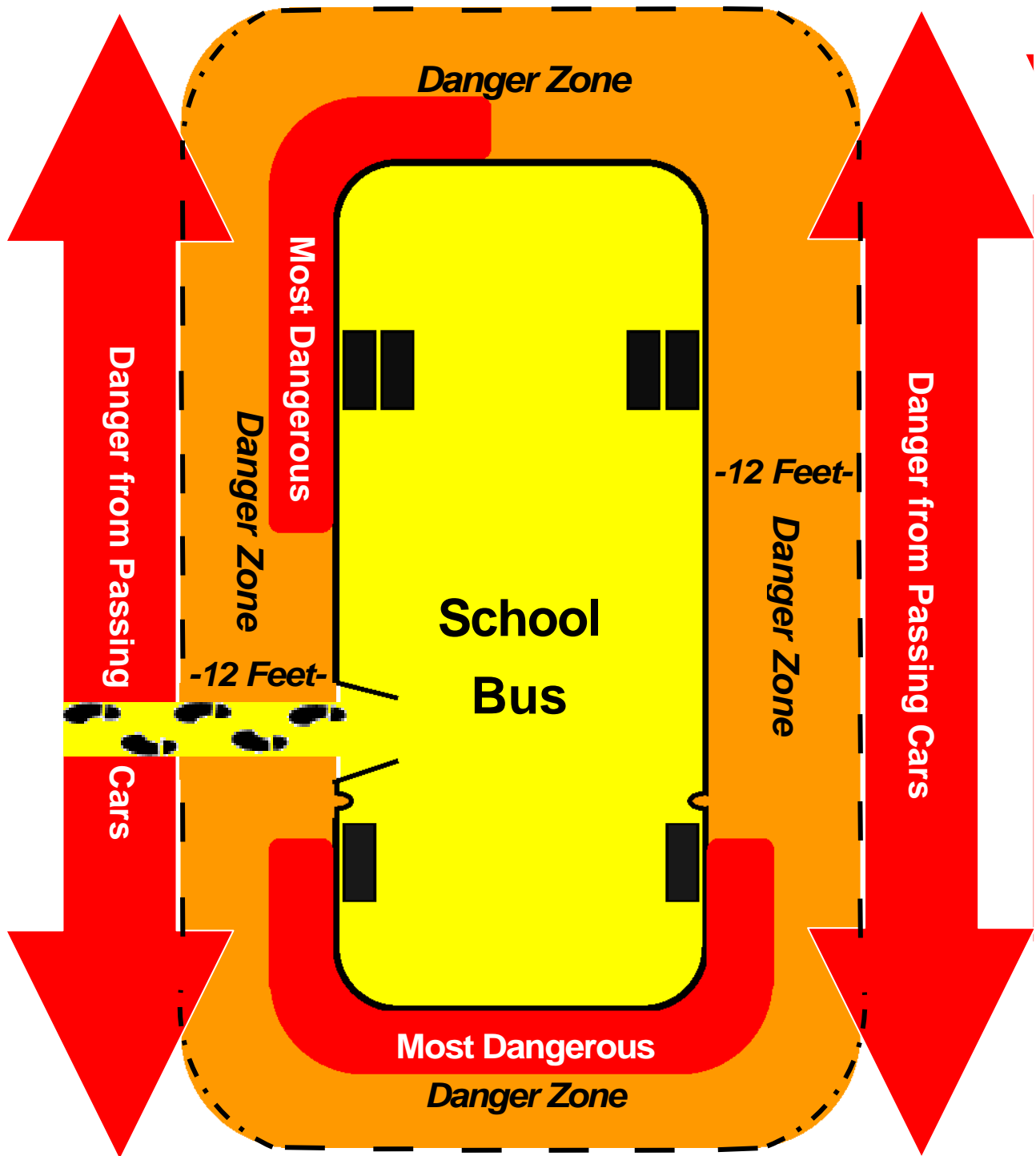
m. Never cross behind the bus.

n. Never get mail from a roadside mailbox.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:**

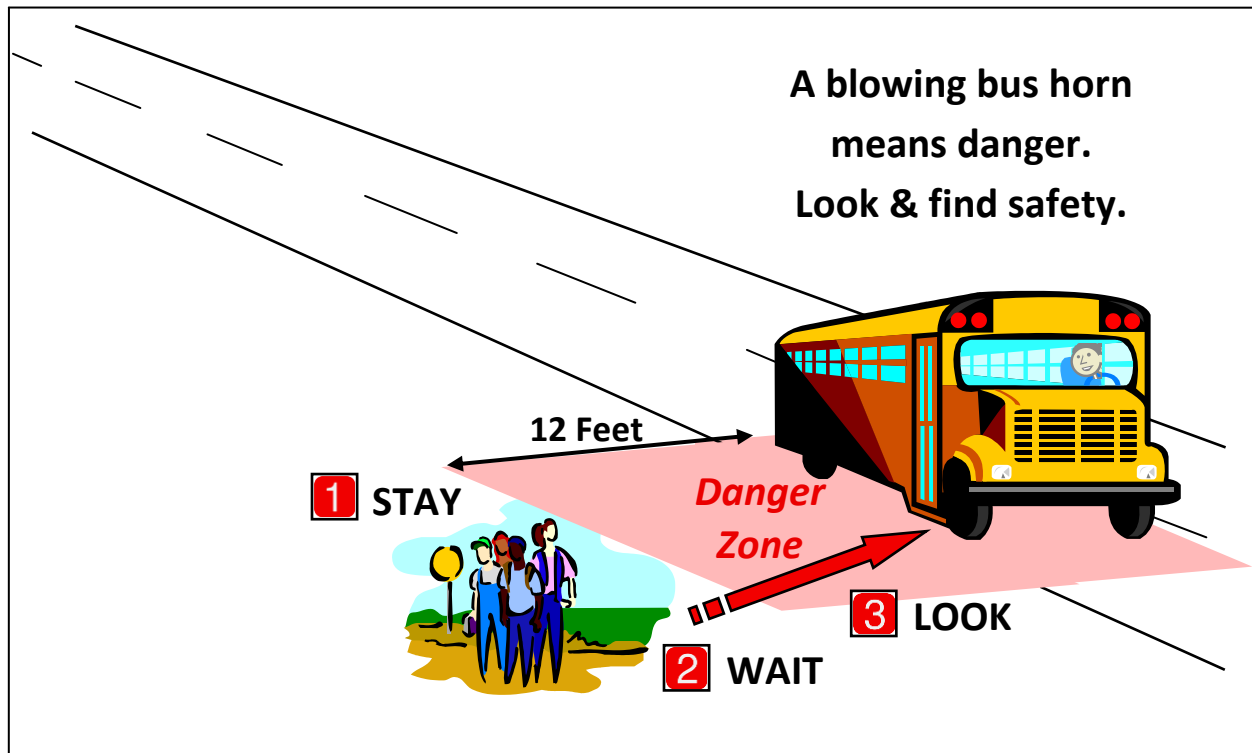
- ***School Bus Danger Zone*** – (See diagram/information that follows)
- ***Safe Student Behaviors if REQUIRED TO CROSS Road AFTER EXITING the Bus*** – (See diagram/information that follows)

# School Bus Danger Zone



## How to Get ON the School Bus Safely If NOT Required to Cross the Road

- 1 STAY** – on your side of the road, 12 feet away from the traffic.
- 2 WAIT** – for the bus to stop;  
for the door to open; and  
for all traffic to stop from both directions. When it is OK . . .
- 3 LOOK** – for moving traffic both ways as you walk through the danger zone, directly towards the bus door and board the bus without delay.



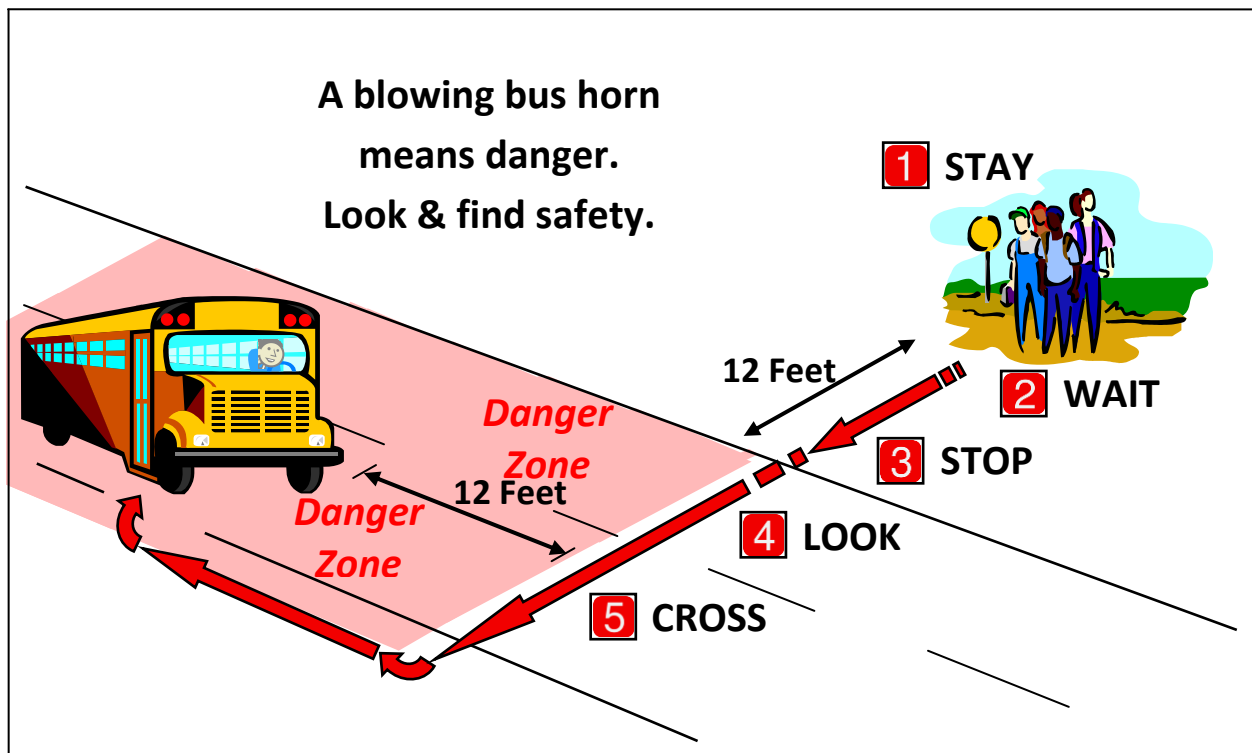
### **DANGER – Cars May Not Stop!**

Remember:

- Stay on your side of the road until the bus comes.
- Stay at least 12 feet away from the edge of the road.
- Wait for the bus to stop and for the door to open.
- Do not step towards the bus until **YOU** look to be sure all traffic has stopped. The stop arm is asking the cars to stop, but they may not stop. If you see a car moving, do not move forward until it has stopped. When it is OK . . .
- Continue to look in both directions for moving cars as you walk straight towards the door. Be sure your bus driver can see you.
- Stay away from the front and rear bus tires and promptly board the bus.
- Go directly to your seat.

## How to Get ON the School Bus Safely If REQUIRED to Cross the Road

- 1 STAY** – on your side of the road, 12 feet away from traffic.
- 2 WAIT** – for the bus to stop and the stop arm to extend. Wait for your bus driver's signal to cross. When you get to the edge of the road . . .
- 3 STOP** – and look for traffic both ways, then check again. When it is OK . . .
- 4 LOOK** – for moving traffic both ways as you walk directly across the road.
- 5 CROSS** – 12 feet in front of the bus in full view of your driver. Be careful in the danger zone and board the bus without delay.



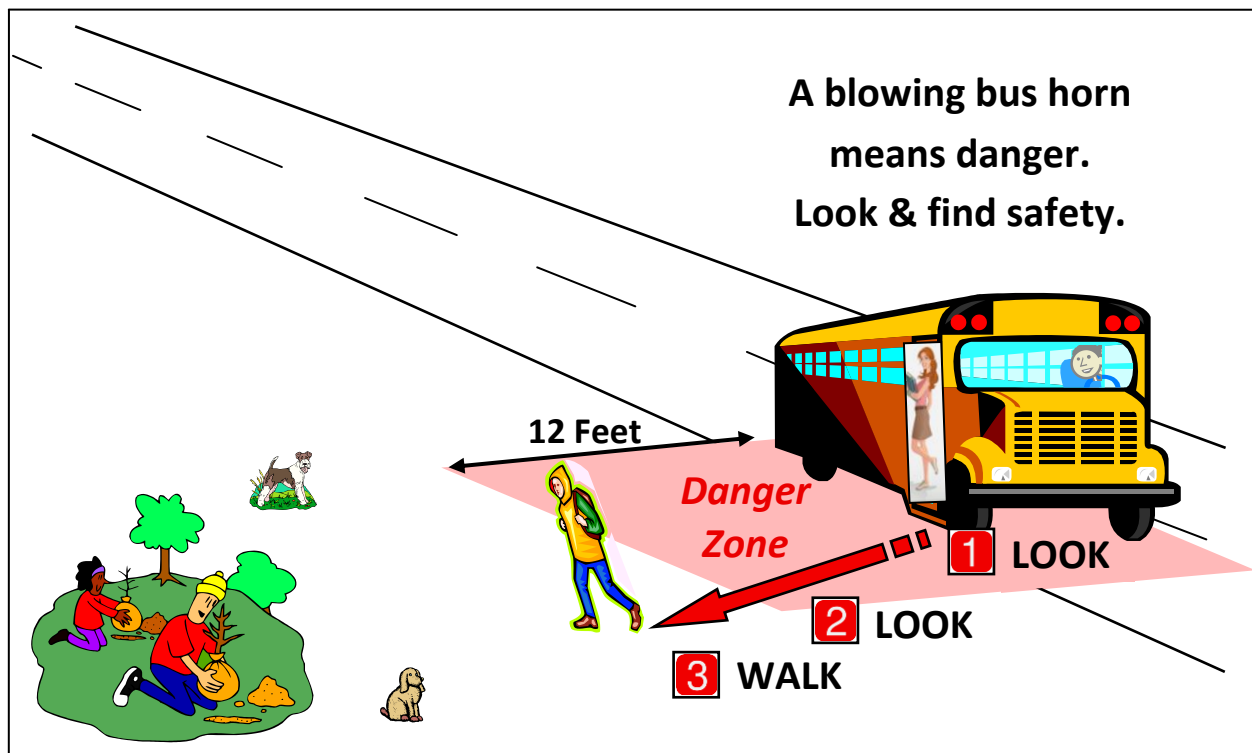
### Crossing the Highway is DANGEROUS – Cars May Not Stop!

Remember:

- Stay on your side of the road until the bus comes.
- Stay at least 12 feet away from the edge of the road.
- Wait for the bus to stop and for your driver to signal when it is safe to cross.
- Stop walking at the edge of the road. The stop arm is asking the cars to stop, but they may not stop. **YOU** must look both ways for moving cars. If a car is moving, do not step into the road. When it is OK...
- Continue to look both ways for moving cars as you walk straight across the road.
- Cross 12 feet in front of the bus and be sure your bus driver can see you. Look for moving cars, be careful in the danger zone and promptly board the bus.
- Go directly to your seat.

## Student Safe Behaviors if NOT Required to Cross Road AFTER EXITING the Bus

- 1 LOOK** – for moving traffic in all directions, especially from your right, before you leave the bus. Cars sometimes pass the bus on the right side. When it is OK, continue to . . .
- 2 LOOK** – for moving traffic both ways as you promptly . . .
- 3 WALK** – directly away from the bus 12 feet before stopping. You want your bus driver to see you leave the danger zone.



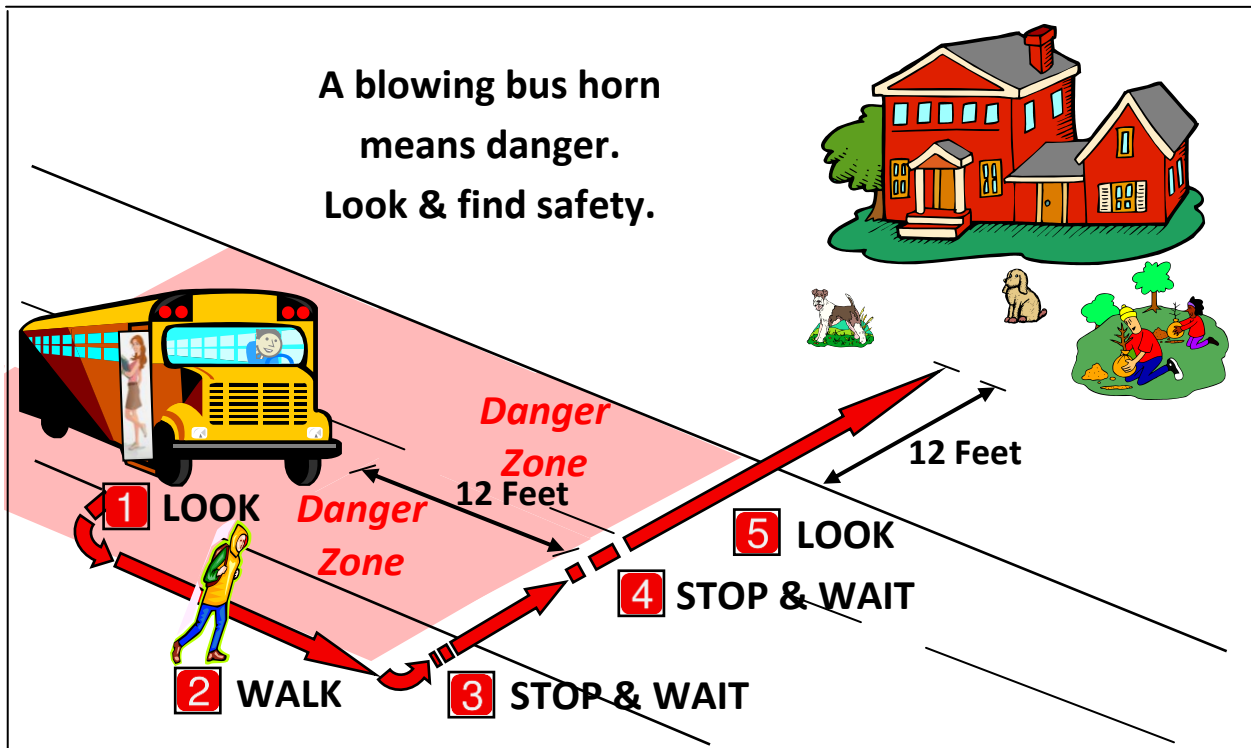
### DANGER – Cars May Not Stop!

Remember:

- **YOU** must look for moving cars in all directions, especially to your right, before you leave the bus. The stop arm is asking the cars to stop, but they may not stop. If you see a car moving, wait for it to stop. When it is OK . . .
- Leave the bus and continue to look for cars in both directions as you . . .
- Walk straight away from the bus, in full view of your driver. Keep walking until you get out of the danger zone, 12 feet away from the bus.

## Safe Student Behaviors if REQUIRED TO CROSS Road AFTER EXITING the Bus

- 1 LOOK** – for moving traffic in all directions, especially to your right, before you exit. Cars sometimes pass the bus on the right side. When OK...
- 2 WALK** – away from the right front of the bus in full view of your driver, going past the extended bus crossing gate. Then stop and . . .
- 3 WAIT** – for your bus driver’s signal to cross. On their signal, stay 12 feet away from the bus and walk to the center of the road and . . .
- 4 STOP** – looking both ways for moving traffic. Wait again for your driver’s signal that it is OK, then continue to . . .
- 5 LOOK** – for moving traffic as you promptly cross & exit 12 feet off the road.



### Crossing the Highway is DANGEROUS – Cars May Not Stop!

Remember:

- **YOU** must look for cars in all directions, especially the right, before you exit.
- When it’s OK, walk straight away from the right front of the bus, in full view of your driver until you get past the end of the bus crossing gate. Be careful in the danger zone.
- Stop and face the center of the road. Wait for your bus driver to signal when it is safe to cross. Then look for moving cars as you walk to the center of the road.
- Stop there and look both ways for moving cars. The stop arm is asking the cars to stop, but they may not stop. If you see a car moving, wait for it to stop. Wait again for your driver to signal that it is safe finish crossing.
- Then continue to look for cars as you walk promptly across & exit 12 feet off of the road.

## Unloading and Loading at School

The safety of students when **UNLOADING at school** is dependent upon the following safe behaviors. **As a student you should:**

1. Remain seated until the bus is stopped and door is opened.
2. Not push or shove, but wait your turn to get off the bus. Most bus drivers will want you to exit by letting seats take turns, going from front to back, side to side.
3. \*\*Have all belongings inside your book bag. This reduces the possibility having to return to the school bus or of dropping something near the bus which creates an unsafe situation. *Students have been struck by their school bus as a result of leaving something on the bus and returning to retrieve it.*
4. Use the handrail for safety.
5. \*\* Check for book bag straps, purses, clothing drawstrings, etc. to make sure they do not get caught on the handrail or in the door. *Students have been injured by the moving bus when something they were wearing or carrying got caught in the handrail or caught in the closed bus door as they exited. If this occurs with earlier exiting students it is more easily identified by the school bus driver, but the greatest danger is for the last student exiting the bus. It becomes even more of a problem if the student exits and walks towards the rear of the bus out of direct view of the driver.*
6. \*\*Walk (don't run) straight towards the school, away from the bus, in full view of your driver. *Students have been struck by their school bus as a result of not promptly leaving the danger zone after unloading.*
7. \*\*Keep walking until you get out of the danger zone, 12 feet away from the bus. *Students have been struck by their school bus as a result of not promptly leaving the danger zone after unloading.*
8. Never run between parked cars and buses.
9. Walk directly inside the school. Do not wait for friends.
10. \*\*Never return to the bus for something left behind or for something dropped without getting the attention of your bus driver. Leave the danger zone staying away from the bus and get the driver's attention by putting your hands and arms above your head and waving to the bus driver. Wait for the driver to see you and to give you instruction before returning to the bus or before picking anything up near the bus. If you do not get the attention of the driver, do not attempt to retrieve the item. *Students have been struck by their school bus when they left something on the bus and tried to return or dropped something and went after it. There are areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see a student (the danger zone) and there is the potential that the bus driver may not see a student and begin to move the bus.*

The safety of students when **LOADING at school** is dependent upon the following safe behaviors. **As a student you should:**

1. \*\*Have all belongings inside your book bag before leaving your classroom. This reduces the possibility of dropping something near the bus which creates an unsafe situation. Never try to pick up something you have dropped that is near or under the bus. Stay away from the bus and get the driver's attention by putting your hands and arms above your



head and waving to the bus driver or by telling the driver when you board. *Students have been struck by their school bus when they dropped something as they were loading and went after it. There are areas around the bus where it is hard for the driver to see a student (the danger zone) and there is the potential that the bus driver may not see a student and begin to move the bus.*

2. Walk slowly towards your bus. Never run.
3. Walk straight towards the bus door and be sure your driver can see you.
4. Stay away from the front and rear bus tires and board the bus quickly.
5. Load in an orderly manner.
6. Make sure this is the right bus. If you get on the wrong bus by mistake, tell the driver.
7. Use the handrail for safety.
8. Go directly to your seat.
9. Never place your head, arms or any object out of the window.
10. \*\*Never chase after a moving bus. Once the buses start moving – you should stop moving. It is better to miss your bus and be safe! *Students have been struck by their school bus when they arrived late in the boarding process and the bus driver was unaware of their presence. Any break in the normal safety routine greatly reduces student safety.*

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:**

- ***School Bus Danger Zone*** – (See diagram/information on a previous page)

## Safe School Bus Riding Practices

The school bus driver has authority over, and responsibility for, students while on the bus. It is the student's responsibility to follow the rules and follow the direction of their school bus driver. Proper student behavior is important because any driver distraction is potentially hazardous to student safety, the safety of the driver and the safety of other road users.

Students should be aware that they are responsible for their actions and behavior and that school bus transportation can be denied if they do not conduct themselves properly. The following are some general rules of conduct for student safety **while on the school bus**.

### **Students should:**

1. Follow directions of the school bus driver the first time given.
2. Go directly to an available or assigned seat when entering the bus.
3. Remain seated.
4. **\*\*Sit the safe way, facing forward with your back against the back of the seat and your bottom against the bottom of the seat. *In the event that the bus driver has to brake hard or if there is a serious accident, it is essential that the student is sitting properly in order for the compartmentalization protection of the padded high backed bus seats to be effective (keeping the student within the safety of the padded space that surrounds them).***
5. Tell your bus driver if someone is picking on you or making you feel uncomfortable.
6. Keep aisles and exits clear.
7. Exhibit classroom conduct at all times.
8. Respect the rights and safety of others.
9. Not destroy property.
10. Remain quiet enough not to distract the driver.
11. **\*\*Remain absolutely quiet at railroad grade crossings. *This is a critical moment. The bus driver must be able to hear an approaching train.***
12. Refrain from chewing gum, eating and drinking on the bus.
13. Not throw objects.
14. Refrain from extending head, arms or objects out of the bus windows.
15. Not use or possess tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons.
16. Not use obscene language or gestures.
17. Not operate cell phones while on the bus or when exiting the bus.
18. Not wear ear buds or head phones when you exit the bus. You **MUST** be able to hear!
19. Not bring onto the bus any animals, glass objects or items too large to hold in your lap.
20. Help keep the bus clean.
21. Refrain from leaving or boarding the bus at locations other than the assigned stop. Follow local school system procedures to obtain signed permission for a change of stop location.

## **Emergency School Bus Evacuation**

While students are being transported to and from school and when they are on extracurricular trips, there is the potential for an accident or mechanical breakdown. While an accident or mechanical breakdown in and of itself does not require that the bus be evacuated, other collateral factors could require an emergency exit.

There exists a need to instruct students on how to properly evacuate a school bus in case of an emergency. Without proper instruction and drills, there is the potential for students to panic and jam emergency exits by trying to exit at the same time. Also, there is a possibility of danger when students improperly jump from the rear emergency door exit. All students should be instructed in emergency evacuation drill procedures.

### **STUDENT EVACUATION INSTRUCTION**

Evacuation of your school bus may be required in case of some bus accidents, fire or an emergency where it was important for you to leave the bus quickly.

There are three ways to evacuate the bus:

1. Front door – If there is an emergency and there is no danger in using the front door, you will do a front door evacuation. In a front door evacuation the bus driver will choose one leader to lead you to a safe place 100 feet (3 bus lengths) away from the bus. The driver will unload students by letting seats take turns, going from front to back, side to side.
2. Rear emergency door – If there is an emergency and the front door cannot be used, you will do a rear door evacuation (all rear-engine buses are equipped with a side emergency exit door in lieu of a rear emergency door). In a rear door evacuation, the driver will choose one leader to lead you to a safe place 100 feet (3 bus lengths) away from the bus. They will also choose two helpers to assist you as you go out the back door using the “Sit & Scoot” method. The driver will unload students by letting seats take turns, going from side to side. The emergency door is to be used only at the driver’s or student helper’s direction.
  - Sit & Scoot – When you get to the emergency door you will NOT jump out of the door. You WILL sit down so your bottom is on the floor and your feet are hanging out of the door. Student helpers will assist you as you scoot out of the door and land gently on both feet.
3. Both front door and rear emergency door – If you need to evacuate the bus as fast as possible, you will use both the front and rear doors where the front half of the bus exits through the front door and the rear half exits through the rear emergency door. Leaders will take you to a safe place 100 feet (3 bus lengths) away from the bus.

Buses also have roof hatches and emergency windows that can be used if other exits are blocked or if the bus turns over.

In all types of evacuation it is important that you:

1. Listen to the driver’s instructions.
2. Remain calm.

3. Remain quiet.
4. Stay seated until it is your turn to leave the bus. You will unload letting seats take turns, going from side to side.
5. Leave books, lunch boxes, and other personal belongings on the bus so you can leave quickly. Those items can be replaced. **YOU CANNOT BE REPLACED!**
6. Walk as you leave the bus. Do not run.
7. Go 100 feet (3 bus lengths) away from the bus.
8. Remain in an orderly group and wait for further instruction from your driver or student helper.