

**TRANSPORTATION
HANDBOOK
2024-2025**

**USD 417
Morris County**

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

So that all parties involved might develop similar understandings of the procedures, rules, and responsibilities associated with the transportation of USD 417 students to school and school activities, we ask that both parents and students read and discuss the contents of this handbook, which is intended to guide the expectations and actions of transportation staff, school administrators, students, and parents/guardians.

USD 417 offers the privilege of transportation to all eligible riders, and every effort will be made to provide a safe, comfortable, and efficient transportation service. USD 417 will not allow any person to negatively affect the school district's ability to provide each rider a safe ride to school.

The last page of this handbook is a form that will be completed during enrollment. In lieu of signing this form, online enrollees have the option to indicate during the online enrollment process that they have reviewed and understand the contents of this handbook.

Thank you for working with us to provide for the care and safety of our students.

Matt Weaver
Transportation Director/Mechanic

Tyson Eslinger
Superintendent

USD 417 SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

Our school bus drivers are hired using a rigorous selection process, which includes a criminal history background check. Each driver has earned a class B commercial driver's license with school bus and passenger endorsements. Drivers are required to pass a pre-employment drug test and physical, and they are subject to random drug and alcohol testing.

Each driver has successfully completed the mandatory school bus driver training class, as well as periodic in-service safety training. Additionally, drivers are certified in defensive driving skills and have satisfied the requirements of a CPR/first-aid course.

USD 417 drivers are trained professionals and are expected to conduct themselves as such. They work hard to earn the trust and respect of parents/guardians and students. As a result of their dedication and professionalism, they expect courtesy and consideration from all students and adults.

SUBSTITUTE DRIVERS

Substitute drivers may be utilized when a regular driver is absent. They are subject to the same training and testing requirements of regular drivers. Substitutes will use the approved route and will make every effort to stay on schedule.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRANSPORTATION TEAM

- Maintain current bus schedules and rider information for all USD 417 buses.
- Meet with drivers each month to discuss procedures, voice safety concerns, and conduct training.
- Investigate all complaints and safety concerns.
- Contact school principals when unsafe behavior is reported. Consequences for unsafe behavior on the school bus may be established by the principal and/or Transportation Director.
- Confer with students, parents, school administrators, and bus drivers when appropriate. Drivers may pull the bus over at a safe location to speak with students about behavior and safety guidelines.

ELIGIBLE RIDERS

USD 417 does not have a distance requirement in order to be eligible for busing. Students who live further than 2.5 miles are picked up at the end of their driveway (if in a rural setting) unless a turn-around is approved in advance by the Transportation Director. Bus stops are available for students who live closer than 2.5 miles. Bus stop information is available at the school or on the district website. Students may be assigned to bus stops. Students using bus stops to which they are not assigned may lose their riding privileges.

Pick up times are estimated and may be changed or adjusted throughout the school year as necessary. **All students are expected to be at their designated bus stop 10 minutes prior to their pick up time.** All riders are expected to follow the guidelines of their school's student handbook, the procedures contained in this handbook, and the instructions of the bus driver.

SCHOOL BUS CONDUCT

A general summation of the bus rules will be posted in each bus.

1. Bus driver is in charge - please cooperate
2. Keep aisle clear
3. Remain seated, facing forward
4. Respect yourself, others, and property
5. Put away items that are unsafe or disruptive if asked
6. Keep all body parts inside vehicle – don't throw anything out of bus
7. No eating or drinking unless approved by driver

PRIOR TO BUS ARRIVAL

All riders are expected to wait at the bus stop until the school bus arrives. Students are expected to practice good citizenship and respect the property of their neighbors. Parent supervision at the bus stop is encouraged at all times. **Parents are not allowed to board the bus.** Designated stops may be moved to locations farther away from students' residences if students fail to respect neighboring property and/or if vandalism is reported.

Bus drivers are not permitted to add stops or move stops. If you have safety concerns about the location of your bus stop and believe a change should be considered, please contact the Transportation Director at the district office.

BOARDING/RIDING THE BUS

The school bus will approach the bus stop and utilize the amber traffic warning lights to alert other drivers of the bus stop. Students are to begin forming a single line and be ready to board the bus. Students should stand on the side walk or 10 feet away from the roadway while waiting for the bus. No student shall ever approach the bus until the bus has completely stopped. The driver will open the door and motion for the students to load. If a student must cross the road, they need to wait for the bus driver to signal that it is safe to proceed.

If no students are visibly present at the bus stop, the bus driver will yield to the stop within the regularly scheduled time frame (10 minutes prior to published stop time – published stop time) and proceed to the next pick-up point. **Bus drivers are not required to wait any length of time at a bus stop, as students should already be waiting at the stop, ready to board the bus.**

Riders are expected to go directly to their seat and prepare for the ride.

School buses are designed with many features for the safety of students. A major safety feature is the compartment formed by each seat, which protects the students sitting on the bench seats. In order for this compartmentalization to work properly, proper seating is required. Anytime the bus is in motion, or is about to be in motion, each student must stay seated and facing forward; the student's torso needs to be facing forward at all times, with the student's back flat against the back of the seat, and the student sitting flat on the seat. **Both feet and legs must be kept in front of their body, and out of the aisle.**

With permission from the bus driver, students may eat or drink on the school bus. Any liquid items must be in a plastic type container with a screw-top lid. If there is trash, the student must properly dispose of it. All candy, gum, food, pens, pencils, or any other objects should be left in a student's backpack.

USD 417 buses can safely transport up to three students per seat. Students may be required to sit three per seat if directed by the bus driver. **Drivers may assign student seating.** Moving from seat to seat is not permitted during the bus ride.

CARRY-ON ITEMS – Carry-on items must be kept in the student's lap while riding the bus. If the item cannot be held in the student's lap or seating space is limited, large items will not be permitted. Sport supplies, balls, etc. must be contained in a bag.

EXCESSIVE NOISE – Creating a disruptive situation by screaming, talking loudly, singing, or making loud noises on the bus will not be tolerated. Riders should talk only to their seatmate or the person next to them, as conversation should be kept as quiet as possible.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES – Students who allow their electronic devices to become a distraction or disruption on the school bus will be asked to put the device away. Failure to do so may result in discipline.

FIGHTS – Drivers are not required to physically break up fights on the school bus. However, the driver will verbally instruct the students to stop, then radio for assistance.

BULLYING - A student, who has been threatened, bullied, or harassed should immediately notify their parent, bus driver, teacher, or school administrator.

ITEMS PROHIBITED ON A SCHOOL BUS FOR SAFETY REASONS

Guns or Gun-like Toys	Glass
Animals	Knives (Any Size)
Water Balloons	Insects/Fish
Brass Knuckles	Lighters/Cigarettes
Paintballs	Laser Pointers
Firecrackers	Stink Bombs
Rubber Bands/Paper Clips	Aerosol Sprays

AT THE SCHOOL

All students are to remain seated until the bus has completely stopped and the bus is secured. Each school has a particular time to unload and students must follow the directions of the driver. When the driver signals to unload, students should begin forming a single line and proceed to the front of the bus. Pushing and shoving may result in a loss of riding privileges.

RETURN HOME FOLLOWING DISMISSAL

When students are released from the school they are expected to go directly to their bus. Once the students board the bus, they are expected to stay on the bus and be seated.

Buses will depart from the school promptly after dismissal unless otherwise instructed by school officials. Once the driver has shut the door, students are not to chase after the bus or run alongside the bus. If a student misses their bus, they are to return to the school to make other arrangements.

EXITING

As the school bus is approaching a designated stop, students should pay attention and be ready to exit once the bus is stopped and secured. Students should remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. No student is ever allowed to stand or walk in the aisle of the bus while the bus is moving.

The amber warning lights signals will be activated before the bus stops. Once the bus is stopped and the door is opened, the red warning lights will be activated signaling all traffic to stop. The driver will allow adequate time for each student to unload.

Students need to look before stepping off of the bus as well as while crossing roadways. All students crossing in front of the bus should watch the driver for assistance. Be alert for vehicles that fail to stop when the bus is unloading. All students should immediately walk away from the bus as they unload. Students shouldn't ever touch the school bus while they are walking away. It is not safe to stand, walk, or cross the street directly behind the school bus. Students must never try to retrieve any item that may end up under the school bus. Students should cross all streets at the intersections while walking to or from the bus stop. They are to obey all traffic signals and signs along the way.

STUDENT CONDUCT CONTRACT

All riders and their parents/guardians must sign and turn in the Bus Rider Contract form located in the back of this handbook to their school's office during the first week of riding; during online enrollment students and their parents/guardians may electronically acknowledge and consent to the terms of the Bus Rider Contract. Failure to return this form or to acknowledge and consent to its terms may result in a loss of riding privileges. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to inform the school of any changes. Schools will then notify the Transportation Director. Parents/Guardians should allow three days for processing. Parents/Guardians are responsible for student transportation until information is processed.

LOST ITEMS

Bus drivers are not responsible for items which are lost or stolen on the bus. Any article found on the bus by the bus driver will be retained for the student for the next few days. If the item is not claimed, the item can be collected at the District Office. Items not retrieved by the end of the year will be disposed of.

RESTRICTED AREAS

USD 417 buses will not enter dead end streets or enter personal property except when approved by the Transportation Director. Use of private property requires approval by the property owner.

FIELD TRIPS/ACTIVITY TRIPS

All bus safety rules apply to riding the bus to school-sponsored events. The bus driver has overall responsibility for the bus and safety of all passengers; however, the sponsor is expected to actively promote a safe environment on the bus by monitoring student activity.

SCHOOL CLOSING

When schools must close due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, all student families will be notified by the school notification system; it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to make sure contact information is correct. School closing information will also be broadcast over the WIBW television station. If early dismissal is necessary, principals and teachers will be certain that no child is released until arrangements for proper supervision have been made. If special arrangements are made, school officials will communicate the arrangements with the appropriate bus driver. When schools in USD 417 are closed due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, we will not transport students to classes held in Emporia, which includes classes held at Flint Hills Technical College.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event of bad weather, buses may be detained at the school or diverted to a safer location. Delivery of students will resume as conditions improve. Students must follow the driver's instructions and remain calm and quiet, so the driver can receive proper safety information over the district radio. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to meet the bus at their student's designated bus stop to allow for orderly delivery of all students. Parents/Guardians are discouraged from meeting the bus at other locations other than the designated stop.

BUS ACCIDENTS

Most bus accidents are minor in nature. The bus driver will notify the Transportation office and the administrator on duty will respond to the scene. All students are required to remain with the bus and cannot leave with parents until released by authorities. Parents/Guardians are expected to cooperate with staff. Law enforcement and emergency personnel have important actions to complete to ensure that each student rider is safe and properly accounted for. The school will be notified in the event of an

accident. In the event of a serious accident, every attempt will be made to notify the parent or guardian.

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

School buses are equipped with standard emergency equipment, such as a fire extinguisher, reflective triangles, a blood borne pathogens spill kit, a first aid kit, and a seat belt cutter.

Emergency windows, doors, and roof hatches are equipped to make a buzzing sound to alert the driver if students lift one of their release handles. Students who sit by these windows or doors are not permitted to lift the red release handles or open these exits at any time unless the driver is evacuating the bus, or the students are being trained on emergency evacuation. Students who tamper with these exits may lose riding privileges.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Practice emergency evacuation drills are performed every semester of the school year. Every rider must participate unless special instructions are given by school staff.

Students must stay calm and quiet and be ready to listen to instructions from the driver. Excessive noise will make it difficult for everyone to hear. Students must follow the driver's instructions; drivers are in charge of the bus and have been trained to take the appropriate actions to protect all students.

The following procedure is an example of a rear door evacuation:

- The rider nearest the door will open the emergency door, exit, and hold it open.
- The second rider nearest to the door will exit and assist the first rider in helping other students exit the bus.
- Evacuation will start with the seat closest to the door.
- The third rider to exit will act as the guide and will lead the other students to a safe place, usually 50 giant steps away from the bus.
- Once outside the bus, students will follow the guide, stay together, and follow the driver's instructions as quickly and safely as possible.
- The driver is usually the last person off the school bus.

The driver is trained to evacuate the bus if an emergency is present. The driver will assess the situation and make a decision to evacuate or keep the students on the bus.

AFTER SCHOOL ATHLETIC BUS

In order for a student to ride the after school athletic bus, they must be participating in a school-approved activity such as sports, cheerleading, or tutoring. Drivers of the after

school athletic routes will require students to sign up on a roster as they enter the vehicle; students must write their name, the activity in which they've been participating, and the board-approved afterschool athletic bus stop to which they need delivered.

The Board of Education has designated the following locations as bus stops for after school athletic runs for the 2024-2025 school term:

West-South Route: Wilsey Main Street (by library), Wilsey Corner, Dunlap Fire Station, and the Delavan Community building

North Route: Dwight/177 Corner, Dwight (8th and Cypress), and PHES

State transportation regulations require written parental approval for loading or unloading students at the following locations:

Wilsey Corner

Wilsey Main Street

Dunlap Fire Station

Dwight (8th and Cypress)

Dwight / Hwy 177 Corner

Delavan Community Building

If a student is to be unloaded at one of the above stops, please complete the After School Athletic Bus Form available at each school, or complete the Activity Bus Transportation section of the Transportation Request Form during online enrollment.

Due to safety consideration, we will not unload a child at a designated stop where transportation from the stop to home is not apparent.

SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION In order to qualify for Special Needs transportation, a student's I.E.P. team must determine that special transportation is needed as a related service. Regular education students with temporary medical conditions or injuries may qualify for temporary special transportation. Please contact the Transportation Director for more information.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM Parents must provide information to the school on a completed Transportation Request Form in order to initiate bus service. Preschool students that live in the Prairie Heights area meet the bus at Prairie Heights School for transport to Council Grove in the morning or afternoon. If the preschool student has a sibling riding a regular route bus, that student may be allowed to ride to school if proper arrangements have been made with the Transportation Director to ensure a child restraint system is available – if arrangements have not been made, the student may be refused transportation. Transportation for each preschool session is provided to and

from Prairie Heights Elementary School. Parents must be present to pick up their child from this location. The bus driver must see a parent/guardian before letting the student off the bus. If no parent/guardian is seen, the student will be taken into the office at the Prairie Heights school by the bus aide. If this situation occurs more than one time, it could result in the student not being able to ride the bus.

STUDENTS ATTENDING SCHOOL IN EMPORIA (USD 253 and FHTC)

Transportation will be provided by USD 417 to Emporia daily as per the USD 253 and/or FHTC calendars. Students should follow the calendar of the school they are attending (i.e. FHTC or USD 253). If USD 417 delays or cancels school on a USD 417 instructional day, district transportation will be delayed or canceled for USD 253 and FHTC students as well.

STUDENTS ATTENDING NON-RESIDENTIAL USD 417 SCHOOL

If a student has been approved to attend a USD 417 school other than their assigned residential school, transportation is the responsibility of the student's family. A student may be permitted to receive transportation services if they meet the bus on the established route at a stop to be determined by the Transportation Director, or where the bus begins/ends the daily route. The bus stop location will not alter the existing route either at the time of initial approval or as a part of future designs of transportation routing.

STUDENTS REQUESTING TO RIDE A DIFFERENT BUS HOME OR TO SCHOOL WITH A FRIEND OR TO ANOTHER LOCATION

Buses are assigned to routes based on the number of riders on the route. If a student would like to ride home or to school with a friend, prior approval is needed. In the event a bus does not have the capacity to accommodate all the riders, students who are assigned to that bus route will have priority.

IN-TOWN BUS STOP INFORMATION

Students not assigned to bus routes may ride to an in-town bus stop that is not assigned to them following dismissal. This is done in an effort to accommodate parents needing transportation for their student to other activities in town. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and their students to communicate with one another and the school about transportation plans, so parents will know the location the student will be unloaded. USD 417 is not responsible for students unloading at an incorrect location.

STEPS TO STUDENT CONSEQUENCES FOR RIDER BEHAVIOR

Step 1: Each student will be given an opportunity to correct or change their behavior with a verbal warning from the driver.

Step 2: Failure to correct the behavior will result in a written warning from the driver and generate a call from the driver or an administrator to the student's home to initiate parent/guardian involvement. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file, and a parent/guardian may request that a copy be mailed or emailed to them.

Step 3: If similar behavior continues, the driver will report the activity on a second written warning. The student's building principal and/or the Transportation Director will determine the appropriate bus suspension/consequences. The school is responsible for notifying the home and the transportation team regarding suspensions/consequences.

Step 4: If similar behavior continues, the student's building principal and/or the Transportation Director may revoke the student's bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year, and transportation will become the parent's/guardian's responsibility. This includes field trips and activity buses.

Any administrator may suspend or revoke the transportation privilege or entitlement of any student that exhibits a behavior for which immediate consequences are necessary.

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

Read and discuss the contents of this transportation handbook with your student(s). If you have any unanswered questions or concerns, contact the Transportation Director. Please inform your student(s) of the bus number, the bus name, and the location of their bus stop.

If a student isn't riding, it is the parent's responsibility to notify their bus driver or the Transportation Department at 620-767-5192 to advise us not to go to the pickup point. This is not required if your child is picked up at a town stop. If the bus comes by three consecutive days and the student doesn't ride, the bus driver will notify the Transportation Director. The stop will be placed on hold until the parent notifies the Transportation Director.

Frequent non-consecutive no call, no shows may also result in the stop being placed on hold; particularly if the stop adds significant time to the route.

Town stops that do not have any riders for 2 or more weeks may be removed from the route, this will require parents to notify the Transportation Director to have the stop reinstated.

Remind your student to tell you, a teacher, a principal, or the bus driver if they have a concern about a situation on the bus.

Please have your student(s) at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the actual departure time. It is recommended you wait with your child at the bus stop. If you cannot be at the stop, and the bus runs late, instruct your students to return home and contact you for instruction. Please help your student understand the benefit of this transportation service, and that riding the school bus is a privilege. Behavior on the school bus is discussed at length in this handbook to establish common expectations.

Once you and your student have covered the contents of this handbook, please complete, sign, and return the bus rider's contract found on the last page to the bus driver within the first week of riding the school bus (if you have not previously acknowledged and consented to the terms of the contract during online enrollment).

2024-2025
BUS RIDERS CONTRACT
USD 417 PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Student's Name (Print)

School

Grade

Bus Name

Home Address

City

State

Zip Code

We have read and discussed the School Bus Riders Safety Handbook and we agree to abide by the rules. I /We give permission for the student's information to be maintained by the Transportation Department to be used for safety and student management purposes.

Student's Signature

Date Signed

Parent / Guardian Name (Print)

Parent / Guardian Name (Signature)

Date Signed

Email Contact: _____

Home # _____ Work #: _____

Cell: _____ Other #: _____