

Peaceful School Bus Program



What are some common problems on school buses?

- Bullying
- Older students “staking claim” to certain areas of the school bus
- Loud noise, shouting
- Disrespect of personal property
- Other problems



Why is the environment on a school bus so difficult to manage?

- It is an impersonal environment: students all sit facing forward.
- The driver is not looking directly at the students.
- The driver is often farthest away from the students who are causing problems.



Difficult environment

(continued)

- The noise level is very loud.
- The bus has no visible connection to school or home.
- The bus is often a cramped space.
- Usually only overt physical actions are caught; more subtle problems are missed.
- Problems that go undetected can escalate.



Why don't traditional disciplinary approaches *alone* work?

- They only address a fraction of the harmful behaviors that occur.
- They don't address hurtful behaviors that are not against the rules.
- They fail to teach students the skills or knowledge needed to solve conflicts effectively.



The problems with traditional approaches *(continued)*

- They make the students who get caught more self-centered and less empathetic.
- They require students to think rationally in a very emotional environment.
- They set low expectations for student behavior.



**A different approach
is needed . . .**

The Peaceful School Bus Program!



What is the *Peaceful School Bus Program*?

- A schoolwide program
- A program designed to decrease inappropriate behavior on the school bus
- A program designed to create a climate of respect and cooperation on the bus
- A program designed to change the social dynamics on the bus by building strong relationships among students and the bus driver



The *Peaceful School Bus* Program is not a . . .

- Discipline program
- Training for bus drivers
- Curriculum



Who is the *Peaceful School Bus Program* designed for?

- The program is designed for students in elementary school and can be adapted for middle school or junior high school students.
- The program can be used with high school students if they play a mentoring role.
- The program can be adapted for use with after-school programs, sports teams, and other youth-serving organizations.



What are the goals of the program?

The main goal:

Develop a positive and safe environment on the school bus for all students.



The main goal is achieved by addressing these subgoals

- Decrease the amount of inappropriate behaviors on the school bus.
- Decrease the amount of time spent disciplining students for inappropriate behaviors on the school bus.
- Decrease the amount of bullying that occurs on the school bus.



Subgoals *(continued)*

- Increase students' sense of responsibility for what happens on the school bus.
- Create a cooperative and supportive relationship between the school and the school transportation department.
- Recognize the identity of the bus route group as an important entity.



Subgoals *(continued)*

- Create greater trust among all stakeholders in the school bus: students, parents, school staff members, and transportation staff members.
- Improve communication among all stakeholders.
- Support and strengthen the existing discipline procedures designed to address school bus problems.



What is the history of the program?

- It was developed in a real-world setting in an elementary school in upstate New York.
- Prior to implementation, the school had approximately 58 bus discipline referrals per year.
- The average number of bus discipline referrals per year after implementation was 9.



History of the program

(continued)

- In 2004, the New York State Sharing Success Network recognized the program as a Promising Practice.
- The program has now been successfully implemented in other school districts.
- It is being well-received at state and national education and school transportation conferences.



What are the program's key principles?

- **Principle 1:** Accept problems as opportunities for learning.
- **Principle 2:** Change the social environment of the school bus and students' behavior will change.



Key principles *(continued)*

- **Principle 3:** Influence can be powerful in changing behavior.
- **Principle 4:** Changing the social environment and improving each student's experience on the bus is a shared responsibility.



Key principles *(continued)*

- **Principle 5:** The gesture itself (implementing the program) has power and influence.
- **Principle 6:** Problems will still occur but they will be easier to resolve if they're identified when they are small rather than when they are big.



Key principles *(continued)*

- **Principle 7:** Students must develop a sense of responsibility or the sense that they can effect change in a variety of positive ways.
- **Principle 8:** Significant change takes time and commitment.



Key principles *(continued)*

- Principle 9: Education works.



What are the program's main components?

- Establish a schoolwide committee to coordinate implementation.
- Hold a training for all participating school staff.
- Inform parents of the program.
- All students in a bus route group meet approximately 3 times a year for 45 minutes each time.



A bus route group is . . .

A group of students who regularly ride to and from school together on a school bus.



Main components

(continued)

- A team of teachers and teaching assistants lead the bus route group meetings.
- School transportation staff and bus drivers are invited to participate in the program.
- Regular check-ins are done with bus drivers.



Main components

(continued)

- The program is repeated annually and becomes part of the regular school schedule.
- During the meetings, students take part in activities designed to build relationships.
- During the meetings, students in higher grades are paired with students in lower grades.



Main components

(continued)

- During the meetings, students discuss bus problems and solutions.
- During the meetings, students are taught about bullying.
- Processes are put in place to facilitate reporting of bullying or other negative behaviors on the school bus.



Why use the *Peaceful School Bus Program*?

- It approaches school bus problems from a positive perspective.
- It moves schools from a reactive approach to a proactive approach.
- It puts **character education** into practice.
- It demonstrates the school's commitment to parents and students.
- It creates a greater sense of teamwork among school staff members and bus drivers.



What is required to implement the program?

- Very little financial cost—all materials are provided in the implementation guide.
- The implementation guide includes a manual, a CD-ROM, and a DVD.
- One guide is needed for each committee member and each bus route group leader.
- One guide is needed for each school administrator.
- No specialized training is required.



What is required to implement the program? *(continued)*

- The program **does** require administrative support and staff buy-in.
- The program **will** require some changes to the school calendar.
- The program **needs** to be implemented over the long-term.



What is the role of a bus route group leader?

- Meet and greet students as they arrive at the bus route group meeting location
- Lead the meeting activities
- Help adapt or revise activities to fit the needs of students



What happens at a bus route group meeting?

- Student arrival
- At the start
- Getting attention
- Checking for understanding
- Forming pairs
- Energizers and warm-ups
- Main activity
- Large group processing
- Dismissal



What is covered in the meeting's main activity?

- Orientation to the *Peaceful School Bus Program*
- Building identity for the bus route group
- Problem-solving
- Bullying issues
- Assessment and affirmation



A time for questions and answers . . .

(Insert your contact information here)

Every Child Deserves a Peaceful School Bus!

