

What Can I Carry On The School Bus?

Any items carried on a school bus must meet all regulations set out in the motor vehicle act. With this in mind the following guidelines for students travelling on school district buses were developed in consultation with parents, district staff, and school bus drivers to affect a reasonable compromise regarding carry-on belongings/musical instruments. These guidelines were implemented October 1995.

Musical Instruments: Musical Instruments will be carried on school district buses if the size does not exceed that of an alto saxophone. All musical instruments must fit comfortably in the student's passenger space and be held in such a way as not to extend into the aisle or interfere with other passengers. Oversized musical instruments such as guitars, trombones, etc. will not be carried.

Personal Belongings: Belonging carried onto the bus must be contained in a **GEAR BAG** which can be easily managed and held by the student. All items must fit comfortably in the passenger's space without extending into the aisle or interfering with other passengers.

Items of a size or nature considered to be hazardous to other passengers will not be carried on the bus (i.e. hockey sticks, firearms, sharp objects, etc.). If a parent or student has a concern about the suitability of an item to be transported he/she is encouraged to contact the Transportation Department.

Driver's Authority: At the driver's discretion students may be directed to designated seats to better accommodate the students' belongings.

In accordance with MVA Regulations, School Bus Drivers CANNOT transport items other than a regular backpack which can fit comfortably on the student's lap without extending into another student's space (or into the aisle, or in front of the student).

The following items CANNOT be safely transported on a school bus:

- **Guitars and Trombones**
- **Tenor and Bari Saxophones**
- **Ice Hockey Sticks**
- **Lacrosse Sticks**
- **Baseball Bats**
- **Drums, Cellos and other large instruments**
- **Large school projects that will not fit on the student's lap**

Items which CAN be transported:

- **A regular size back pack that sits comfortably on the student's lap**
- **Small band instruments such as flutes, trumpets- anything up to the size of (and including) an alto saxophone**
- **Balls contained within the student's backpack**
- **Skateboards completely enclosed in a zippered bag (no longboards)**
- **Grass/Field Hockey sticks completely enclosed**

School buses are engineered to provide the highest level of protection for a large group of passengers. They are not designed to safely carry cargo along with the passengers. The compromise is the backpack, with all items stored securely inside that can sit comfortably on a student's lap. Hard items sticking out of the backpack and/or strapped to the outside of the backpack compromise the safety of compartmentalization.

Under the compartmentalization concept, seat backs in school buses are made higher, wider, and thicker than before as well, they are closer together. All metal surfaces are covered with energy-absorbing padding. Today's bus seats must also have a steel inner structure that bends forward to help absorb energy when a child is thrown against it the seat must give just enough to absorb the weight of the child in the seat behind. This protects the child in the event of a sudden stop or accident. Anything that is stored in front of a student's face or between their legs prevents them from receiving the protection of the padded surface in front of them. Anything stored on the floor becomes a hazard that they or other students could trip on.

We in the transportation department have a responsibility to transport students safely to and from school. Allowing unsafe, insecure cargo is neglecting that responsibility. We appreciate your efforts and your support in maintaining a safe environment for all children riding school buses.