

Lesson 5: School Bus Safety

Time: approximately 40 minutes

This curriculum does not cover every possible scenario that a child may encounter as a pedestrian, but instead addresses the basic skills needed to be a safe pedestrian. Teachers should use their discretion as how to appropriately break material to accommodate their daily schedule. Studies have demonstrated that skill-building activities are the most effective way to promote student retention of pedestrian safety skills. While the “Activity” portion may be postponed to a future class period if needed, it is an essential component to this curriculum and all lessons should be complemented with the reinforcement of safe pedestrian behavior. More time can be spent on practicing the behavior if children are already familiar with the core material.

Lesson Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to teach students safe school bus riding behavior, as well as safe boarding and exiting techniques.

The students will be able to

- Demonstrate safe behavior while waiting, boarding, riding, and exiting the school bus
- Identify “danger zones” around a school bus and responsibilities of people on the school bus

Applicable National Standards of Learning:

- Physical Education Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.
- Physical Education Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
- Health Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Health Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Materials:

Chairs, cones, beanbags, yard stick, masking tape, rope, or other materials to create a school bus

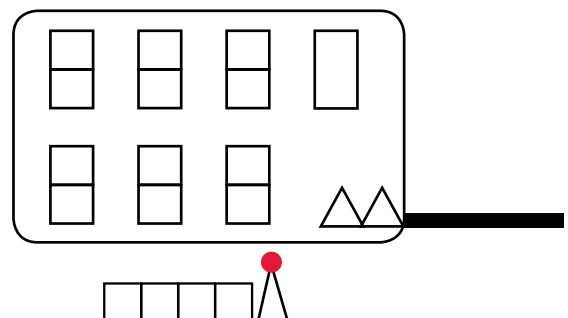
Poster-sized chart of “School Bus Safety” song

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

Preparation: Using the materials listed above, make a model school bus.

You will need to arrange several chairs into rows of two, leaving one chair by itself on the left side of the front row as the school bus driver’s seat. Use cones, beanbags, or other placeholders to represent the school bus door. Use a yard stick to represent the cross bar.

You can also create a school bus stop using chairs to form a bench and cones with signs.



Lesson Outline

Introduction: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Identify reasons for riding the school bus
- Explain how school buses are used, their benefits, and why they deserve respect and caution

Discussion & Teacher Modeling: (10 minutes)

The teacher will

- Discuss and simultaneously model proper school bus safety behavior

1. Identifying Danger Zones

Sample Script

Buses are long vehicles that carry many passengers along a fixed route.

Raise your hand if you have ever ridden a bus.

Why did you ride the bus?

- *To get to school, to go on a field trip, etc.*

There are many different types of buses, depending on how they are used. There are school buses, city buses, and even cross-country buses.

Buses are wonderful in many ways, but because of their size, they deserve respect and caution. Today, we are going to explore school bus safety!

Let's pretend that this is a school bus and a school bus stop (use diagram from the preparation portion of this activity plan). This seat is the driver's seat, the chairs are the passengers' seats, the space between the chairs is the aisle, and the cones are the door. The long yardstick coming from the front of the school bus is a long metal bar that folds out from the front to the side of the school bus. It is called the crossbar. It makes you walk out far from the front of the school bus so that the driver can see you if you must cross in front of the school bus.

Before you board a school bus, it is important to know the danger zones.

They are unsafe areas around the school bus where the school bus driver can't see us.

Look at our school bus and imagine school buses you have ridden.

Where do you think the most dangerous areas around a school bus could be?

- *In front of the school bus, behind the school bus, the sides of the school bus*

To keep away from these danger zones, always stay at least 10 feet or 5 big steps away from the school bus in front, behind, and on the sides of the school bus. Watch as I move 5 big steps away from the school bus.

Lesson Outline

Sample Script

2. Waiting for a School Bus

Okay, now that I know to always be cautious around a school bus, let's think about what I should do while I am waiting for the school bus. Remember that it is dangerous to get too close to the school bus.

Where do you think I should stand to wait for the school bus?

- *At the school bus stop*

Right! A school bus stop is an area where the driver knows to stop in order to drop-off and pick-up students that want to ride the school bus. The driver is sure to see you there.

Now that I am at the school bus stop, I need to remember some other important rules while I wait.

How should I act while waiting for the school bus?

- *Stand or sit on the sidewalk, 5 big steps away from the edge of the road*
- *Stay close to the adult in charge, never leaving them*
- *Do not run or play around the school bus stop*

3. Boarding a School Bus

Let's think about what happens next when the school bus is arriving at our stop. Picture this school bus approaching our stop. It slows down. It stops at the school bus stop. The door opens. When the school bus driver signals that it is safe, we may get on the school bus.

Watch as I walk up the steps. I use the hand rail to climb the steep steps.

Who and what will I see right when I get on the school bus?

- *The school bus driver sitting at the front of the school bus (the bus driver is in charge; he/she will get you to and from school; you should ask him/her if you need help)*

Let's also think about how a school bus may be different from other vehicles. Who can tell me some differences between a school bus and a car that we usually ride?

- *There are more seats*
- *There is a handrail to hold on to when stepping on or off the school bus*
- *School buses sit up higher than cars*

Lesson Outline

4. Safe Behavior When Riding a School Bus

5. Exiting a School Bus

- Explain how to safely exit the school bus
- Explain safety precautions when crossing in front of the school bus

Sample Script

Once someone steps onto a school bus, they are now called a **“passenger.”**

Passengers have responsibilities just like pedestrians. To be a good passenger, it is important to follow rules on the school bus. What are some rules we should follow on the bus?

- *Find your seat quickly*
- *Stay seated when the school bus is moving*
- *Do not bother the school bus driver while the school bus is moving*
- *Be polite to other passengers and talk quietly*
- *Keep your hands to yourself and any items you may be carrying on your lap.*

Watch as I enter the school bus and follow these rules to be a safe school bus passenger.

When the school bus driver has arrived at the school, or back at the school bus stop after school, we wait until the school bus is completely stopped before we get out of our seat. Why do we do that?

- *If the school bus is still moving, we could fall. We are safer seated.*

Once the school bus has stopped, we then quickly, but without running, get off the school bus. Why is it important to not dawdle and take a long time to get out of our seats and off the school bus?

- *The school bus driver may not know you are getting off until you stand*
- *The school bus driver may drive away without letting you off if you don't act like you are getting off*

Great! Once the school bus has stopped moving, it is time to get out of our seats and **move toward the exit**. Watch as I move toward the exit of the school bus and hold the handrail as I exit.

After I exit the school bus, I have to remember to move out of the danger zone.

How do I move out of the danger zone?

- *Take 5 big steps away from the school bus*

Sometimes, we will need to cross the street to get to where we need to go. If we do have to cross the street, we also have to be sure we are safe at all times. It is always safest to cross the street with an adult, like we learned in earlier lessons. Sometimes, an adult is not available to help us cross the street. I am going to demonstrate what you should do if you have to cross the street after exiting the school bus:

First, I will walk to the edge of the extended crossbar.

Who remembers what the crossbar is and why it keeps us safe?

- *It is the long metal arm that stretches out along the side of the school bus. It shows us where to walk in front of the school bus so the driver can see us*

Lesson Outline

5. Exiting a School Bus (*continued*)

Activity Options:

The students could...

- Practice safe school bus behavior, sing and dramatize the “Safety on the School Bus” song, and play “Freeze” game to demonstrate understanding of concepts (20 minutes, *see sample script*)
- Practice safe school bus riding practices using the model bus created in the preparation portion of the lesson (10-20 minutes)
- Practice safe school bus riding practices with parent volunteers by using a real school bus provided by the school district (20-30 minutes)

Sample Script

I will be sure to **make eye contact with the school bus driver** to make sure he/she sees that I need to cross in front of the school bus. I can do this by waving or nodding at the driver.

Next, I will **move around the school bus’s crossbar**, NOT under or over the crossbar, and cross in front of the school bus. How should my body look when I am walking in front of the school bus?

- *My head should be up, looking and listening for traffic*

At the far edge of the school bus, I will stop and look **left-right-left** to see if there are other vehicles coming. I will also look at the school bus driver for a sign that it is OK to cross. When it is clear, I will **walk to the other side of the street**.

What should you do if you drop something getting on or off the school bus?

- *We should tell the school bus driver that we dropped something and ask for help to retrieve it. We should not run after it or try to pick it up because the school bus driver will not see us.*

ACTIVITY OPTION A:

Now, it’s your turn! Each of you is going to get the chance to show me what school bus safety means.

Let’s practice being safe on the school bus together by singing our song and practicing on the bus. **[Teacher displays “Safety on the School Bus” song in the Materials section (with reasons for being safe included in this level); students follow along to sing as they simultaneously board, ride, and exit the model school bus OR, if the model school bus is not large enough to accommodate all students, make body motions to demonstrate the steps for being safe on the school bus.]**

Now I’m going to quiz you on your new school bus safety knowledge. We’re going to play a game:

- **Freeze:** Turn on some music. Have the students dance and wiggle. Randomly turn off the music and yell, “Freeze!” All students have to freeze in mid-motion. Pick a student (preferably one that did not freeze) and ask them a question relating to school bus safety (i.e., “What should you never do while waiting for a school bus at the school bus stop?”). If the student produces a correct answer, they continue playing. If they are incorrect, they are out and have to sit to the side. Continue until one student remains and is the “School Bus Safety Champ.”

Lesson Outline

Closure: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Reiterate the steps for being safe while riding a school bus

Sample Script

Let's review all that we have learned today.

Where are the danger zones around the school bus?

- *In the front, sides, and back of the school bus*

Where and how should I wait for the school bus?

- *At the school bus stop, five big steps away from the edge of the road. Stand on the sidewalk if one is available.*
- *In a calm and controlled manner*

Once the school bus has stopped and the school bus driver has signaled that it is safe to board the school bus, what should I do when entering the school bus?

- *Hold onto the hand rail*
- *Find a seat quickly*

How should I act while riding the school bus?

- *Stay calm and seated, talk quietly, be polite to other passengers, and keep your hands and materials on your lap*

After the school bus has stopped at my destination, what should I do?

- *Move to the exit, hold the hand rail while exiting, and move 5 steps away from the school bus*

Last, if I have to cross the street, what should I do?

- *Move around the crossbar, make eye contact with the driver, keep your head up, stop at the outside edge of the school bus, look left-right-left, look at the school bus driver for a sign that it is okay to cross and safely cross when there is no traffic.*

After the review, teachers are encouraged to invite a school bus driver with his/her bus to allow students to practice the safe behavior. Parent and other adult volunteers are recommended to make this first-hand experience more valuable and safe for the children.

“Safety on the School Bus” Song

Sung to the tune of “Wheels on the Bus”

We can ride the bus safely,
 Bus safely,
 Bus safely.
 We can ride the bus safely,
 We follow the rules.

The passengers stand to wait for the bus.
 Wait for the bus.
 Wait for the bus.
 The passengers stand to wait for the bus.
They are calm, quiet, and safe.

The kids on the bus hold on to the rail.
 Hold on to the rail.
 Hold on to the rail.
 The kids on the bus hold on to the rail.
So we don’t fall down.

The teacher on the bus says, “Please stay seated.”
 “Please stay seated.”
 Please stay seated.”
 The teacher on the bus says, “Please stay seated.”
So we don’t tumble around.

The driver on the bus says, “Shh! Shh! Shh!”
 “Shh! Shh! Shh!”
 “Shh! Shh! Shh!”
 The driver on the bus says, “Shh! Shh! Shh!”
So she can concentrate.

The kids on the bus keep their hands to themselves.
 Keep their hands to themselves.
 Keep their hands to themselves.
 The kids on the bus keep their hands to themselves.
So we are safe on the bus.

The door on the bus swings open wide.
 We step five.
 We step five.
 The door on the bus swings open wide.
So we step away safely.

The crossbar on the bus swings out in front.
 Out in front.
 Out in front.
 The crossbar on the bus swings out in front.
So the driver can watch us cross.

We can ride the bus safely,
 Bus safely,
 Bus safely.
 We can ride the bus safely,
 We follow the rules.

Suggested Cross-Curricular Connections:

These optional activities are included to extend the lesson into other areas of learning. Most activities presented may be completed within a 20-minute time period.

Art

- School Bus Safety Poster (created individually or in small groups)
 - The posters can target one portion of school bus safety to target (i.e., waiting for the school bus, riding the school bus, exiting the school bus, or crossing the street around a school bus), or student posters can emphasize all portions of school bus safety.
 - Students can create a catchy slogan to “hook” the audience into their poster. They should also include artistic representations to make their poster eye-catching and appealing.
 - Posters can be displayed around the school as reminders for how to stay safe around and on the school bus.
 - Visit the National Association for Pupil Transportation www.napt.org to learn more about the annual school bus safety poster contest. Encourage students to enter their posters.

Math

- Story Problems
 - Using addition and subtraction facts for second grade and multiplication and division facts for third grade (if appropriate), students can create several story problems using the school bus for the setting and passengers as characters. These story problems can be used as part of a classroom math activity, or used as part of a review game for the students.
 - Story Problem Example (2nd Grade): The school bus is on its way to the middle and elementary schools in the town of West. On its route, the school bus makes several stops. At its first stop, the school bus picks up 12 students. On the second stop, the school bus picks up 9 students. At the last stop, the school bus picks up 18 students. When the school bus stops at West Middle School, 16 children exit the bus. How many children are left on the school bus to continue on to West Elementary School? (Answer is 23 students)
 - Story Problem Example (3rd Grade): There are 24 children on the school bus. If each seat can hold two children, how many student seats are filled on the school bus? (Answer is 12 seats are filled)

Literature & Writing

- The following is an appropriate example of children’s literature to use with this lesson in the unit of study:
 - ***Staying Safe on the School Bus (Safety First)*** by Joanne Mattern
 - Students will read and discuss this nonfiction book about school bus safety
 - Students will create their own nonfiction “All About” book on school bus safety

Guest Speaker/Hands-On Experience

- Invite a school bus driver to the school to share his/her experiences with the students.
- The students can model safe school bus riding practices on the driver’s actual school bus while it is stationary in a parking lot.

Materials

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet