

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 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 bus

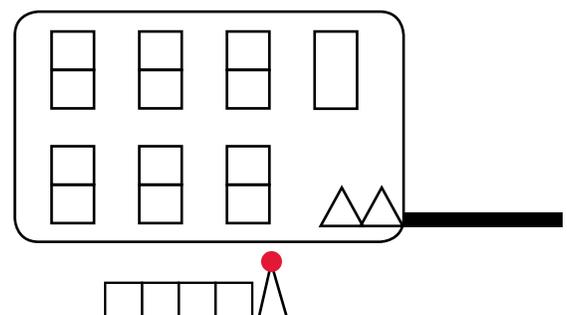
Poster-sized chart of “Bus Safety” song

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

Preparation: Using the materials listed above, make a model 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 bus driver’s seat. Use cones, beanbags, or other placeholders to represent the bus door. Use a yard stick to represent the cross bar.

You can also create a 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 bus
- Explain how 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 need to be used with 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 yard stick 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 the front of the school bus.

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

These are places around the school bus where it is difficult for the driver to see. They are unsafe because the school bus driver is seated too high to see you.

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

2. Waiting for a Bus

3. Boarding a Bus

Sample Script

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. Watch as I demonstrate these important rules.

First, I am standing or sitting on the sidewalk, 5 big steps away from the edge of the road.

Next, I am staying close to the adult in charge, never leaving them.

Finally, I am in control of my body. I am not running or playing.

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

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

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

- *The school bus driver sitting at the front of the school bus (the school bus driver is in charge; he/she will get you to and from school; you should ask him/her if you need help)*
- *Many benches that are seats*
- *A handrail to hold on to when stepping on or off the school bus*
- *Rows of windows*
- *An aisle*

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

In other lessons, we've talked about being "walkers," or people who walk.

Once someone steps onto a school bus, they are now called "**passengers.**"

Passengers have responsibilities just like walkers. To be a good passenger, it is important to follow these rules:

- 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.

Now, when the school bus stops at the school, or back at the school bus stop after school, it will be time to exit.

- 1) Once the school bus has stopped moving, it is time to get out of our seats and **move toward the door to exit.** Watch as I move toward the exit of the school bus.
- 2) I am going to **hold the hand rails** as I get off the school bus, the same way that I did when I entered the school bus.
- 3) After I exit the school bus, I have to remember to move out of the danger zone. I need to **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:

- 1) First, I will walk to the edge of the extended crossbar (remember this is the long metal bar that folds out from the front to the side of the school bus, where you walk to where the driver can see you). 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 bus. I can do this by waving or nodding at the driver.
- 2) I will **move around the bus's crossbar**, and **cross at the front of the school bus.** As I cross in front of the school bus, I am going to keep my head up and look out in front.
- 3) At the far edge of the school bus, I will **stop and look left-right-left** to see if there are 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.**

If, for some reason, you drop something before getting on or off the school bus, you should tell the school bus driver immediately and ask him/her to retrieve it. Never run after it or try to pick it up yourself. By telling the school bus driver, he/she knows to wait and help you be safe at all times.

Lesson Outline

Activity Options:

The students could...

- Practice safely entering and exiting the school bus, being school bus passengers, and sing and dramatize the "Safety on the School Bus" song (20 minutes, *see sample script*)
- Practice safe school bus riding practices using the model school 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)

Closure: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

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

Sample Script

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.

To make it a little easier to remember all of the rules, I want to teach you my special song that will help us. ***[Teacher displays song and sings the song once for the students; then, the teacher sings while the students follow along.]***

Great work! Let's practice the motions for being safe on the school bus while we sing our song. ***[Teacher and students sing the song 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, simulate body motions to demonstrate the steps for being safe on the school bus.]***

Let's review all that we have learned today.

First, always stay 5 big steps away from the front, sides, and back of the school bus. Wait at a school bus stop with an adult in a calm manner. Stand 5 big steps away from the edge of the road. Stand on the sidewalk if one is available.

Next, wait until the school bus stops and the school bus driver signals that it is safe to board the school bus. Always hold on to the handrail when entering or exiting the school bus.

Then, find your seat quickly, stay calm, and keep your hands to yourself and materials on your lap while riding the school bus.

After the school bus stops, move to the door of the school bus, hold the hand rail while exiting, and move 5 big steps away from the school bus.

Finally, if you have to cross the street, go in front of the crossbar, make eye contact with the driver, and keeping your head held high, 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 OK 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.
We follow the rules.

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.
We follow the rules.

The teacher on the bus says, “Please stay seated.”
“Please stay seated.”
Please stay seated.”
The teacher on the bus says, “Please stay seated.”
We follow the rules.

The driver on the bus says, “Shh! Shh! Shh!”
“Shh! Shh! Shh!”
“Shh! Shh! Shh!”
The driver on the bus says, “Shh! Shh! Shh!”
We follow the rules.

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.
We follow the rules.

The door on the bus swings open wide.
We step five.
We step five.
The door on the bus swings open wide.
We follow the rules.

The crossbar on the bus swings out in front.
Out in front.
Out in front.
The crossbar on the bus swings out in front.
We follow the rules.

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

- Students can make a model, child-sized school bus and school bus stop from cardboard boxes. These can be used for the students to practice safe behavior in a dramatic play center throughout the unit. They will also be used as props for a culminating unit dramatization of all pedestrian safety topics.

Math

- Comparing Sizes
 - Students can analyze the size of a school bus and make comparisons to commonly known items, such as bikes, cars, and elephants.
 - The average school bus is 10 feet tall.
 - The average elephant is 9–11 feet tall.
 - The average car is about 5 feet tall.
 - An adult bicycle is typically between 3-4 feet tall, depending on the user and type of bicycle.
 - Using a flip chart, students can list items that are bigger or smaller than a school bus. If possible, have shapes of common objects ready and ask the students where the items should be categorized. Students can also place objects in the correct order by size.

Literature

- The following are appropriate examples of children’s literature to use with this lesson in the unit of study:
 - ***Molly Rides the School Bus*** by Julie Brillhart
 - Students can read and discuss this fiction book about a kindergartener’s first day riding the school bus. They can evaluate the problems Molly has while riding the school bus, which rules are broken, and what safety rules Molly should be following
 - ***Staying Safe on the School Bus (Safety First)*** by Joanne Mattern
 - Students can read and discuss this nonfiction book about 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