

Prohibited Carry-On Items on DoDEA School Buses

Purpose and Scope

Authority. This guidance is issued under the authority of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Chief of Transportation. Its purpose is to provide clarification to the Student Transportation Offices (STOs) on prohibited carry-on items on school buses.

Effective Date. Effective immediately and is mandatory for all STOs to implement.

Introduction. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that a school bus is the safest vehicle on the road and that your child is much safer taking a bus to and from school than traveling by car. DoDEA believes school buses should be as safe as possible and that is why our safety standards for school buses go above and beyond any of the federal and state requirements for student safety. Therefore, with respect to student safety, we have developed guidance for items prohibited on school buses during the daily commute and on curricular /co-curricular activities.

Guidance. DoDEA prohibits students from bringing items that do not fit within the categories of being contained within one standard size backpack, transported safely in the student's lap or fits securely under the student's seat. Under no circumstances shall aisles, doors, windows, steps, or emergency exits be blocked or obstructed for the safety of all passengers. All passengers must have a seat. At no time will a passenger be denied a seat because of baggage or equipment.

Note 1. For curricular or co-curricular transportation, students with extra equipment and/or baggage will place items in the storage bins underneath the bus or in a designated location in the rear of the bus. Transportation requests requiring additional storage for band, sporting equipment, or activity supplies; will need to be noted on the request prior to the scheduled activity.

Prohibited Items

Items that are not allowed on the school bus include, but not limited to: weapons² (operative or ceremonial), any items that may be converted to a weapon², pets or any live animals, except service animals on special needs buses, items made from glass, flammable, explosive items or liquids (for example, firecrackers, matches, or lighters), paints, plants, play putty and other arts & craft items, sharp objects or objects with points, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, prohibited drugs, food for class parties or large class objects, and skateboards. In addition, any athletic equipment, and musical instruments that cannot be transported comfortably on a student's lap are prohibited.

Note 2. A weapon can be anything designed or used for inflicting bodily harm or physical damage to another person or property, such as toy guns, toy knives, craft knives, fingernail clippers, baseball bats, utility tools, etc.

Prohibited Carry-On Items on DoDEA School Buses

Prescription medications and over-the-counter medicines (such as: Tylenol, cold remedies, etc.) are not permitted on the school buses. If a student needs medication, the parent should deliver the medication directly to the school nurse. Epi-pens or sweet packs will be given to the bus driver by the school nurse for the driver to carry and dispense.

Wearing cleats on the school bus is also prohibited. Cleats can damage the interior of the bus and create unsafe conditions such as slippery, wet surfaces for our student athletes.

Permissible Items

All carry-on articles, (not listed as prohibited), that can be secured in a book-bag, backpack, or something similar that is small enough that the passenger can hold it in her/his lap or place it comfortably under the seat.

Note 3. The STO may grant an exception to allow a limited amount of large permissible items in the passenger compartment dependent upon the current occupancy of the bus and driver's ability to transport students safely. If approved, any unoccupied seats in the front of the bus may be used. Items should not be placed where they may drop on or be thrown into passengers in case of an accident or sudden stop. Store heavy items first, as low as possible, and nothing should extend above the seat back.

Communication

The STO must communicate with school administrators and parents when transporting school required items (musical instruments, science projects) that will cause significant safety issue. The parent/student must receive prior approval from the STO to transport an item on the bus. Students arriving at the bus stop with carry-on items, that may create a safety issue, that have not been coordinated and approved could be denied ridership. Approval will be based on first come, first serviced and availability of space.

If an item is too large or creates a potential safety hazard to transport on the school bus, it must be brought to school by alternate means. It is the responsibility of the student and their parents to make this arrangement.

The STO should incorporate these guidelines in service contracts, procedures and safety briefings for all stakeholders to ensure that sponsors/parents, school administrators and service providers are informed of the rules.