Classcraft

How to manage student behavior on the school bus

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Ah, school buses — they're a place where students get to relax and chat with one another in the mornings and afternoons, as well as on their way to field trips. But this relaxed atmosphere can sometimes be a breeding ground for bullying and other types of misbehavior. What can you do to make sure your school buses are a safe environment for all students?

Managing behavior on the school bus is just as important as doing so in the classroom. Many administrators understand the importance of encouraging positive behavior in school because it creates an environment that is conducive to learning. When student behavior is monitored on the school bus, it reduces distractions for the driver and makes for a better environment on the ride to and from school.

One great way you can implement behavior control on the school bus is through positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). PBIS focuses on rewarding positive behavior rather than penalizing children who

misbehave. Naturally, PBIS looks a bit different on the school bus than it does in the classroom, but there are still many ways to implement it successfully. Here are some ways you can manage student behavior on the school bus with PBIS.

7 ideas for school bus behavior rewards

1. Raffle tickets

The best way to improve student behavior on the school bus is to offer tangible rewards to those who behave well. However, it may not always be in your budget to reward good behavior every day. If you are looking for a way to reward children without breaking the bank, a raffle could be an excellent option. There are a couple of different ways you can structure this, depending on your goals and your students' current behavior.

If you are looking to make significant strides in improving your students' behavior on school buses, you can reduce the frequency of misbehavior by rewarding students with a raffle ticket for each good behavior observed. This would mean that children could earn multiple tickets in a day and have a better chance of winning the big prize.

Another approach is to offer only one raffle ticket a day to each student. This would mean that each student would need to act according to the rules and expectations for the duration of each ride to and from school every day. If a student acts out, no raffle ticket would be rewarded that day, but they would still get a chance to redeem themselves the next day.

The most important thing to remember is to make sure each student understands what they did to earn the reward they received. Acknowledge their good behavior so they're aware that it's desirable and something they should practice each day.

2. Special seat passes

Is there a highly coveted seat or group of seats on the bus that many children race to? A lot of school bus riders love the back of the bus. Unfortunately, this is sometimes because it's the easiest place to misbehave without getting caught. If this is a problem with your students, you can easily turn the behavior around by awarding seat passes to the students who behave according to expectations each day.

On the first day that you introduce this PBIS reward system, allow each student to sit wherever they please. When you see bad behavior, gently redirect each child and let them know that they will be rewarded with the privilege to choose their own seats only if they respect the rules of the bus. If students continue to misbehave, have them sit in a designated seat that is always empty for a defined period. Always remind students they can earn their right to sit in their chosen seat by behaving well.

3. Pick a song

Many modern buses have built-in stereo systems that play music for bus riders. If this is the case at your school, children who behave well on the bus can rotate picking stations or songs to listen to. If your bus isn't equipped with a stereo system, you can still implement this reward by equipping your bus with a simple Bluetooth speaker. Just be sure electronics aren't used while driving — this can be avoided by allowing certain students who have behaved well to control the playlist, rather than forcing the bus driver to do so.

4. Bus driver's helper

Many schools have implemented a reward system for line leaders: students who lead the line to different parts of the school, like to lunch or recess. This same reward can easily be applied to school bus riders. Students who follow the rules of the bus and are respectful to those around them could earn the chance to be the bus driver's helper for the day. Duties such as greeting students when they get on the bus and looking out for other students who are exhibiting goal behaviors can be assigned as the bus driver's helper.

This is a great incentive to implement on the school bus because it gives students the attention and respect they often crave. Instead of misbehaving for attention, students will redirect their efforts into behaving well and earning a sought-after privilege. It also gives other students a chance to see what good behavior looks like, which could encourage them to follow suit. This creates an environment where everyone is on their best behavior, resulting in a peaceful and safe bus ride for everyone aboard.

5. Bus rider of the month

Each month, be on the lookout for students who exemplify the behaviors you want to see while riding the school bus. It can be helpful to keep a running list so you can tally the behaviors at the end of each month.

Once you've chosen a winner, present them with a special certificate with their name on it. Congratulate the student on their good behavior and remind everyone else that there is always a chance for them to be recognized for the same actions. This is a wonderful way to make students feel unique and proud of their accomplishments.

The best part? This reward can also serve as motivation for other children to act accordingly in the hopes of earning the same recognition.

6. Treasure chest

Small, fun prizes are an affordable and easy way to reward students who meet your expectations. Invest in a little treasure chest, and fill it with things like stickers, small toys, pencils, and slime. At the end of each bus ride, the students who behaved can choose a prize from the chest. You can also implement this strategy on a weekly or monthly basis instead.

7. Points contest

Sometimes, the best way to get kids interested in improving their behavior is to make it a game. One simple way you can do this is to start a points contest. Students are split up into teams and given target behaviors to

show while riding the bus. On the days when an entire team shows good actions and doesn't misbehave, they are rewarded with a point. At the end of the game, the team with the most points wins a prize.

How it works:

- First, split the bus up into teams. Let children choose their teams or split teams down the middle based on where students are sitting.
- Then, explain the rules of the game. It is important to emphasize that all students are in this together — even if only one person violates the laws of the bus, the entire team loses their points for the day.
- This encourages students to remember the things that are expected of them and to support their classmates in doing the same.

The prize that is won at the end of the game should be highly valuable to all students on the bus. Naturally, this may vary depending on the age level of your riders. Take a look at **these easy ideas**. It doesn't matter how big or small the prize itself is; it only matters that your students are interested and motivated to be the winner.

PBIS and school bus behavior

Implementing PBIS on the school bus is a wonderful way to bring about the behavioral changes you want to see in this environment. By encouraging students to engage in good behaviors, you empower them to make the right choices. Children probably already know how misbehaving can negatively impact them. Incentivizing good behavior helps them to understand that following your expectations and rules has a positive impact on their lives, too.

If at first you struggle to get kids on board with this new PBIS system, don't be discouraged. It takes time and effort to get everyone on the same page and interested in being involved. Not every strategy will work for every school bus, and that's okay — all you need to succeed is one effective incentive. The key is to never stop trying.