



Driving a school bus is a challenging job. You are given the responsibility of safely transporting students of all ages to and from school. You have an obligation to drive safely and attentively in all kinds of traffic and weather conditions. But you also have the duty to supervise the activities of a bus full of students--and to do it all while keeping your eyes on the road.

Managing the behavior of the students on your bus is probably the toughest part of your job. Here are some strategies that will help you prevent difficult behavior from happening in the first place.

## **Get To Know Your Students**

Learn your students' names. Smile and greet them by name each time they get on the bus. Get to know your students and let them know you're interested in them.

## **Be a Positive Role Model**

Be friendly and polite. Say "please" and "thank you". Show your riders the behavior that you would like to see from them. Compliment good behavior.

## **Respect Students' Personal Space**

Students have little personal space on a school bus. Be sure that you don't crowd them any more than is necessary. If you need to approach a student, try to remain at least one leg-length away.

## **Be Aware of Body Language**

Body language includes posture, movement, gestures, and facial expressions. As students board the bus, watch for signs that a student might be anxious or upset. Also, be aware of your own body language. Try not to do things that may appear threatening to the student, such as scowling, putting your hands on your hips, or shaking your finger in a student's face.

## **Remain Calm**

Even when students are belligerent or insulting, don't allow them to push your buttons. If you lose control, you will probably make the situation worse.

## **Set Limits When Rules Are Broken**

When a student breaks a rule, tell the student what rule has been broken and why it is important. Then, set limits. Setting limits means that you provide the student with choices and with the consequences of those choices. Stress the choice you prefer the student to make.

## **Establish Rules**

Keep your rules short and simple. If you have too many rules, students won't remember them. Four or five is usually enough. Try to state your rules in a positive way. For example, "Keep your hands to yourself" is more positive than "Don't hit!" If appropriate, give a written copy of your rules to all riders, and post them on the bus too.

Having a plan to deal with difficult behavior will help you keep control, maintain your positive attitude and keep everyone on your bus safe.