

EXCERPTS FROM 2007 FCPS PATROL HANDBOOK

Bus drivers have an important role in the selection, training, development, and use of bus patrols to enhance the safety of our children. These excerpts will help acquaint you with your important role and the roles of others.

(To see the entire publication check with your office or go to:

<http://www.fcps.edu/fts/safety-security/publications/safetypatrol.pdf>)

BUS STOP PATROLS

One or more patrols may be assigned to duty at each bus stop. Each patrol is assigned to a bus stop close to his or her home. Guidelines for bus stop patrols follow:

- Be on time to your post, ten minutes before the bus stop.
- Keep students out of the street.
- Inform students about inappropriate behaviors such as fighting, cursing, throwing objects, and hitting.
- Warn students a second time before reporting them.
- Use good common sense in dealing with the people at your stop.
- If students who must cross the road to board the bus have not done so before the bus arrives, the bus patrol walks to a point 10 to 15 feet in front of the bus directly in front of, and in line with, the bus driver. The patrol holds a red flag toward the center of the roadway. The driver will signal the students when it is safe to cross. The students walk between the patrol and the bus. The bus stop patrol leads the way.

BUS PATROLS

- Patrols are assigned to bus duty to assist the driver with student safety while on the bus.
- Each bus has four patrols. Posts are in the front, two in the middle, and back of the bus at emergency exits.
- Patrols assist with safety at bus stops and schools by having students stand in an orderly manner, in a line behind the patrol, while the bus is approaching for pick-up.
- The front patrol helps children get on and off the bus. The front patrol counts the students as they get off the bus when they arrive at the school in the morning.
- The middle patrols help students and keeps order. Middle patrols also assists students exiting from side exits during an emergency.
- The back patrol is posted at the emergency exit at the rear of the bus. The back patrol assists students exiting at the rear of the bus during an emergency.
- During bus evacuation drills, patrols will open the emergency exits from inside the bus, exit, and stand beside the door to assist students. Throughout this process, school personnel will be posted alongside the patrols to prevent student injuries and monitor the drill.
- When students are being discharged from the bus and need to cross the street, a patrol leads the way to a point 10 to 15 feet in front of the bus directly in front of, and in line with, the bus driver. The patrol holds a red flag toward the center of the roadway. The driver will signal when it is safe for the students to cross. They walk between the patrol and the bus.
- Bus patrols should not move from their seats to perform their duties while the bus is in motion. In order to be alert and helpful to the bus driver, patrols should not use headphones, play video game's or read during the bus ride.
- Patrols that are assigned to ride a bus but are not assigned to bus duty (i.e. bus stop patrols or patrols assigned to school posts) should remove their belts.
- Patrols should use the arm-stretched signal from schoolmates to wait in back of you as the bus approaches for pick-up at the bus stop and on school grounds.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

The relationship between school bus drivers and patrols is very important. The school bus driver and patrols work together as a team to ensure safe transport of students. The bus driver provides guidance and support to patrols as they carry out their bus duties. Bus drivers are responsible for:

- Recommending possible bus patrol candidates to the school patrol sponsor.
- Assisting, instructing, and supporting safety patrols in the performance of their duties.
- Reviewing proper crossing procedures and the signal that will be given to students indicating it is safe to cross.
- Instructing patrols in how to activate the emergency brake and 4 way hazard lights, use of the two-way radio and turning off the bus ignition, should there be an emergency and the driver is disabled.
- Reviewing proper emergency evacuation procedures with the patrols.
- Utilizing the patrols as spotters when it is necessary to back the bus.
- Coordinating the rotation of duties among the patrols assigned to the bus, keeping no more than four active patrols on duty during transport.
- Ensuring that only patrols with proper equipment are on active duty.
- Reviewing and discussing bus/bus stop safety violations and reports with patrols.
- Communicating with the school patrol sponsor with regard to any changing patrol concerns, training, and/or recommendations.

SELECTION

Safety patrols are selected first from rising sixth grade students, and then from rising fifth graders. Fourth grade students are asked to serve only when students from the fifth or sixth grade are not available to cover a post. In schools with no sixth grade students, the majority of patrols should be chosen from the fifth grade, and fourth grade students may be chosen where needs exist. Patrols are selected with input from teachers, administrators, and patrol sponsors, and bus drivers. Consideration is based on student interest, academic achievement, commitment, sense of responsibility, and attitude toward others. In most cases, students who are dedicated to their school work will be dedicated to patrol responsibilities. The number of patrol chosen for bus duty should be limited on each bus (one front, two middle and one rear position). This will alleviate confusion and allow for easier rotation of duties.

PARENT CONSENT

Parent consent and patrol application forms are available from the SEO serving the school. The school may use its own form. Consent application forms are current for one school year and should be on file in the school. Each new patrol must have a form on file before assuming any patrol duties. A returning patrol from a previous year needs an updated form. For students who have served as patrols before, consent application forms on file from the previous year may be used if necessary on a temporary basis, but updated forms should be obtained as soon as post assignments are made. Under no condition shall a student serve as a safety patrol or a substitute patrol without the written permission of a parent or guardian. Many schools do not issue patrol belts until permission forms have been completed and signed. See Appendix B for a copy of the consent application form and information on patrol duties and responsibilities for parents.

TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Safety patrol trainees shall have at least two weeks of "on-the-post" training with experienced patrols. Many schools have a spring training program for rising patrols. This is supplemented in the fall and on an as-needed basis. Schools are encouraged to involve bus drivers in these training sessions when possible. After the training period has been completed and the trainee demonstrates ability and confidence, the new patrol is assigned to a post. Safety patrol trainees are typically given post assignments at the end of the school year for the following year. Films on duties of walker and bus patrols are available from the SEO assigned to the school. Belts are typically issued when permission forms are completed and signed. Badges are often awarded once the trainee can recite the patrol pledge. See Appendix C for the patrol pledge. The pledge is among the materials that patrols receive from the SEO.

SAFETY PATROL CAMP

The SEO assigned to the school will provide information to patrol sponsors about Fairfax County's police-sponsored summer safety patrol camp. The SEO will indicate how many patrols can be accommodated at the camp. The safety patrol camp provides leadership and safety patrol training. Recreation opportunities are included. Funding for the camp is often provided in whole or in part by the school PTA. Parents are asked to provide the remainder of the expense. Students attending the camp typically serve as patrol officers. These students are selected from the rising sixth grade class (fifth grade if the school has no sixth grade). An established procedure should be in place for selection of patrol camp attendees. The safety patrol sponsor and the school principal are responsible for selecting students, and the principal gives final approval to all appointments.

PATROL(S) OF THE MONTH

Safety patrol members are rewarded for meritorious work. Schools may recognize a safety patrol or patrols of the month (both a walker patrol and a bus patrol awardee). School sponsors are encouraged to ask bus drivers for recommendations. Each patrol of the month wears a gold badge and receives a letter and a certificate. These items are provided by the SEO. In addition, the school may wish to send a letter home to the parents and announce the winner on the school radio or television system. The patrol(s) of the month demonstrates meritorious work such as being on time to post, doing extra patrol duties, showing unusual care for schoolmates, and being an excellent role model. See Appendix E for a sample parent letter for the patrol of the month.

YEAR-END RECOGNITION

The SEO provides patrol sponsors with information on obtaining service pins and certificates to present to patrols in good standing at the end of the year. Bus drivers should be encouraged to attend.

OUTSTANDING PATROL PROGRAM

One Fairfax County safety patrol is selected annually to represent Fairfax County Public Schools in a metropolitan Washington AAA area program. Each school may nominate one patrol who has performed in an exemplary manner to be the school's outstanding patrol of the year. The school principal, in coordination with the patrol sponsor, is responsible for selecting this student. The SEO for the school will provide a nominee form to each school. The winning student from each participating metropolitan jurisdiction is invited to a recognition luncheon and receives a U.S. Savings Bond and a plaque.

OUTSTANDING ACTS COMMENDATIONS

The AAA sponsors special awards for patrols that render distinguished service involving a child's safety and for patrols that perform lifesaving acts. Patrol sponsors, bus drivers, and principals can consult with the SEO.

DISCIPLINE AMONG THE PATROLS

The internal discipline of patrol members is basically the responsibility of the patrol sponsor. Each school develops its own procedures for "probation" and "suspension." Suggested guidelines are included below. All patrols are expected to be responsible students and role models. If a patrol consistently causes problems at school, at the bus stop, on the bus, or in the classroom, the principal or patrol sponsor has the option to place the student on probation. Teachers and bus drivers may also suggest that students be placed on probation. A patrol on probation is asked to turn in his or her belt and badge to the patrol sponsor for the probationary period. The patrol's duties will be assumed by a designated patrol selected by the patrol sponsor. A letter is sent to the patrol's parents explaining the probation and the reason for taking the action. See Appendix F. The probationary period lasts three weeks. This gives the student time to improve behavior, grades, or whatever problems caused the probation. The period of probation is monitored by the patrol sponsor, teachers, bus drivers, and administrators with the expectation that the student will improve and resume a responsible position. If, after a second probationary period, a patrol continues to demonstrate an inability to follow established guidelines, suspension from the patrol force can occur. The decision is made on a case-by-case basis by the administration in cooperation with the patrol sponsor, bus drivers, and teachers.

PATROLS AND OTHER STUDENTS

Patrol members provide direction and assistance for schoolmates. Reports can be filled out and given to sponsors under the following suggested procedures for patrols:

1. If you notice a student not following expected behaviors, ask the student politely to stop the inappropriate behavior.
 2. If the student continues, give the student a warning in a calm voice.
 3. If the student still continues, give a second calm warning.
 4. Complete a report slip if inappropriate behavior continues.
 5. Give the report slip to the patrol sponsor.
 6. If a problem occurs on the bus, obtain the bus driver's signature on the report slip before giving it to the patrol sponsor.
- A sample report form is included in Appendix G. The patrol sponsor handles the report slip by meeting with the student and informing the classroom teacher. The administration may be involved in serious or significantly habitual situations.

KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE CLASS PRESENTATION ON *Your Safety Patrol*

A selected bus and a selected walker patrol visit a kindergarten or first grade class wearing their belts and badges. A possible script follows, but patrols should feel free to alter or develop their own scripts with patrol sponsor approval. Patrols should practice before presenting.

Walker Patrol: Good Morning (or afternoon)! I am (say name), and I am a walker patrol.

Bus Patrol: And I am (say name), and I am a bus patrol.

Walker Patrol: We are going to teach you what we do: when walking or riding a bus to school. If you walk to school, a patrol like me will be standing at corners on your way. We have a special way to stand to let you know whether to wait behind us or to walk across the street. (Show both stances).

Bus Patrol: If you ride a bus with bigger boys and girls, a patrol like me will be at your bus stop and on your bus. We are there to keep you safe while you wait, to help you get on the bus safely, and to make sure that you stay safe on the bus.

Walker Patrol: I am going to pick one boy and one girl who are sitting quietly and attentively to come up and practice how to stand to show students to wait and then walk across the street. (Pick two students and model how to stand one step back from the curb in the proper wait position, and then how to stand to let students walk across the street.) All of you may want to practice that later, but remember that the patrols are the ones in charge to help you stay safe.

Bus Patrol: Remember to stay in your seat and to use quiet voices and nice manners on the bus. We are going to give your teacher some pretend paper patrol badges so that you can practice how to be patrols when you get bigger. (Hand each teacher a set of paper badges which students can cut out. Teachers may also want to direct students to make paper patrol belts out of strips of orange paper).

SECOND GRADE PRESENTATION ON *Rainy Weather Safety*

The presenting patrol should bring rainy weather patrol gear to the classroom. After greeting the students, the patrol should put on the coat, hat or cape, or the patrol may choose a second grade student to model. The patrol should then point out the following rainy day safety guidelines to students. The patrol may want to put these guidelines on a poster to present to the class.

Rainy Weather Safety

1. Watch out for cars. Drivers can't see you as well.
2. If you are getting in or out of a car at Kiss and Ride or on the street, get in or out through a door by the curb.
3. Sidewalks and streets are slippery. Be careful and don't run.
4. Do not go or stay outside if there is thunder or lightning.
5. Carefully obey all regular walking and traffic rules.
6. Make sure your rain hat or umbrella does not keep you from seeing where you are going.

FOURTH GRADE PRESENTATION ON *Patrol Roles*

As some fourth grade students may wish to become patrol trainees later in the year, a presentation on roles of patrols would be very helpful early in the year. It is suggested that the patrol officers arrange a visit to each fourth grade classroom and lead a discussion on the roles of walkers, bus stops, and bus patrols and the requirements for good patrols. The first two pages in this handbook on patrol roles and responsibilities can be used for preparation and assistance in this presentation.

APPENDIX B

BUS DRIVER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUS PATROLS

BUS DRIVER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUS PATROLS

Bus Driver _____ Bus # _____

Please recommend your students who would make good patrols. The attributes we look for in patrols include students who are responsible, relate well with others, and show a commitment to the school and respect bus rules and safety procedures. When making this recommendation, please also consider any location along the route where it would be beneficial to have a bus stop patrol and/or a bus patrol.

Your recommendations have been the single best predictor of students who become successful patrols. We appreciate the time and effort you take in making thoughtful nominations.

Please place these forms in _____ by _____.

STUDENTS I RECOMMEND FOR PATROLS

<u>Student Name</u>	<u>Stop Location</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This student would make an excellent choice to attend patrol camp this summer and to become an officer of the safety patrols:

Driver Signature

APPENDIX D

PATROL MEMBER'S PLEDGE

*I promise to do my best to:
Report for duty on time.
Perform my duties faithfully.
Strive to prevent accidents, always setting a good example myself.
Obey my teachers and officers of the safety patrol.
Report dangerous practices of students.
Strive to earn the respect of fellow students.*

APPENDIX G

SAFETY VIOLATION REPORT FORM

<p>SAFETY VIOLATION REPORT</p> <p>Student Reported _____</p> <p>Teacher's Name _____</p> <p>Act Committed: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Was Prior Warning Given? Yes No</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Patrol Reporting</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Bus Driver Signature</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Action Taken (Circle Response)</p> <p>Discussion with Student</p> <p>Note Sent Home</p> <p>Telephone Call to Parents</p> <p>Sponsor's Initials _____</p>

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In response to concerns for the safety of student safety patrols during the Washington area sniper incident, a review was made of the duties and responsibilities of patrols. A committee of representatives from the American Automobile Association, Fairfax County Police Department, Office of Transportation, and Office of Safety and Security was involved in this review. There was unanimous agreement that there should be no limitations or restrictions placed on the use of patrols. The circumstances of the sniper incident were unique. Student safety resulting from a terrorist threat is a concern; however, accident statistics will show that children are at greater risk of injury from an automobile. The role of the safety patrols at street crossings, bus stops, and on buses is vital to the safety of elementary children. Safety patrols are important and they are effective in making the school environment safer. Nevertheless, the committee agreed that emergency procedures could be implemented to assist patrols in a crisis situation. These emergency procedures would be for unusual and critical situations that threaten the safety of patrols. They could be implemented by a principal, as in the case of a lockdown at a particular school, or system wide by the superintendent, as in the case of a county wide threat. Patrols should not be subject to greater risk than other students because their duties and responsibilities make them visible. The temporary use of volunteers/parents in place of safety patrols should be considered when there is legitimate concern for the safety of patrols. The following procedures can be used to develop such a volunteer force. It is important that parents, police and the community be informed of any emergency, if possible, prior to enacting these procedures.

1. At the beginning of the school year, the principal will develop a list of volunteers who will act in place of the student patrols. The purpose of the volunteer is to temporarily fulfill the duties of the safety patrol. The volunteers will ride buses, be present at bus stops, assist at street crossings, help with Kiss & Ride and perform other duties of the patrols in the event patrols are not available because of a "lockdown" or other emergency situation.
2. The principal should have a list of all bus stop locations and student crossings (where student patrols are stationed). This information will be used to identify patrol posts that need to be covered by volunteers.
3. Patrols should not wear their belt and badge once the volunteer force has been summoned. If the patrols are not performing a service, they should not be distinguished from other students. The intent of this action is to not draw attention to the patrols because of the patrol belt. Patrols can wear the belt and badge inside the school, with the principal's permission, when assisting with hall duty, assemblies, dismissal, or other activities. When patrols return to their duties, they will again wear the belt and badge.
4. The duties, responsibilities, and practices of the patrols should be documented and given to the volunteers prior to their taking on the duties of the patrols.
5. The director, Office of Transportation, can authorize bus drivers to pick-up walking students if there is room on the bus.
6. The assistance of the county school system cable programming service can be used to broadcast the need for volunteers. A "ticker tape" message soliciting the help of volunteers to temporarily fulfill the duties of safety patrols can be an effective way of obtaining volunteer help.
7. Establish a communication link between volunteers and the school. Volunteers should use cell phones or hand held radios to keep the school office informed of activities on the street. Schools should identify critical information they want the volunteers to report. This could include: the progression of students walking to school, observing suspicious persons, emergency events, and other information. If an emergency arises or a suspicious person is spotted, first call 911 before reporting the information to the school.
8. Schools should utilize the Keep-In-Touch program offered through the Office of Community Relations to solicit volunteers and to notify the community of emergencies.