



Responsibility Toward Vulnerable Minor Bus Riders Policy

Purpose: While it may not be responsible to do so, parents sometimes allow their minor children to ride unaccompanied on our buses and there may be various reasons why our bus operators or other transit employees will encounter unaccompanied minor children.

- Children may utilize our buses to run away from their homes.
- In some cases, children riding our buses may be coerced by an adult acting with ill intent toward the child. The adult may not be present at the time or may keep a distance from the child to remain undetected.

In any case, this policy is meant to provide reasonable steps to be followed for protecting these vulnerable unaccompanied children from self-harm or intentional predatory behavior by others, through notification to appropriate law enforcement agencies and CityBus management.

Group covered by this policy: This policy is directed at the protection of unaccompanied children 11 years of age and younger. Those unaccompanied riders who are 12 and older should not be reported according to this policy, unless specific conditions are observed. Those conditions could include, but are not limited to, obvious injury, disheveled condition, confused state of mind, riding late at night, or alighting from the bus during extreme weather conditions. In all cases, unaccompanied children under the age of 11 are to be reported according to this policy. If the age of the child is in doubt, a report should be made.

Additional guidance: Bus operators or other transit employees are not permitted to physically intervene when observing the minor children described in this policy but are required to follow the reporting procedure as immediately as practicable. Bus operators are prohibited from engaging in confrontational interactions with children, parents, or those who may appear to be coercing or controlling a child. These precautions are intended to protect the transit employee and the child. Law enforcement officers will be responsible for determining and carrying out any enforcement that may be necessary.

- Children may be consulted with but are not to be forced to remain on the bus or CityBus property.
- When groups of children are present, but unaccompanied by an adult, the qualifying children should be reported.

- Children who qualify under this policy, but are being transported to and from school, are an exception and should not be reported.

CityBus Center customer service staff who identify an unaccompanied minor child should follow all guidance directed by this policy and immediately make a report as outlined in the section below for dispatchers. Item c does not apply.

Reporting child abuse: Any person who observes abusive behavior toward a child may voluntarily make a credible report to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-800-5556.

Policy Steps: The following steps must be taken by bus operators as soon as safe conditions allow.

- 1) Report to dispatch by bus radio or telephone the following observations:
 - a. Approximate age of the child
 - b. Race of the child
 - c. Clothing the child is wearing
 - d. Route designation and geographic location of your bus
 - e. Description of any others who may appear to be associated with the child being reported

Dispatchers: Promptly upon receiving a bus operator report of a child covered by this policy, the dispatcher must:

- a. Report by telephone to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
 - Lafayette Police Department at 765-807-1200 if the child is in Lafayette
 - West Lafayette Police Department at 765-775-5200 if the child is in West Lafayette
 - Purdue Police Department at 765-494-8221 if the child is on the Purdue campus
 - All information should be reported as given by the bus operator.
- b. Standby for instructions from the police and follow any orders given.
- c. Remain in contact with the bus operator if support is needed.
- d. Contact Manager of Operations when any call escalates to a police response.
- e. In all cases, as soon as practicable, make a report by email including:
 - 1) The reporting individual's name
 - 2) Bus number or CBC location
 - 3) Time the report was taken
 - 4) Full description of the event