

# THE DRIVER DE-ESCALATION POCKET GUIDE

(Recommended: Print Front/Back, Laminate, and Place on Visor)

## Section 1: The Golden Rule

### "Control Yourself First."

An escalated driver cannot de-escalate a student.

**The 3-Second Reset:** Deep breath. Unclench jaw. Think: *"This is not personal. They are a child."*

## Section 2: The Scripts (Traffic-Safe Commands)

Do not get into an argument. State the safety need.

Situation	Don't Say (Escalates)	Do Say (De-Escalates)
Standing Up	"Sit down right now!"	"I can't move this bus until you are safe in your seat. Help me get us moving."
Loud Noise	"Shut up back there!"	"It's too loud for me to hear the sirens. I need 'Library Voice' for 5 minutes."
Fighting	"Stop it or you're in trouble!"	"Hey [Name], I need you up here in the front seat so we can cool down."
Refusal	"Do it because I said so!"	"I'm asking you to do this for your safety. Please work with me."
Vaping	"Give me that vape!"	"I see what's happening. Put it away." <i>(Follow proper reporting to administration)</i>

## Section 3: The Decision Matrix

<b>■ GREEN LIGHT (Keep Driving)</b>	<b>■ RED LIGHT (Pull Over Immediately)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yelling/Loud talking</li><li>• Brief standing</li><li>• Name-calling</li></ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Address over PA or wait for stop. Do not pull over.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical fighting (hands on)</li><li>• Throwing objects at driver</li><li>• Weapon visibility</li><li>• Student exiting window/door</li></ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Secure brake. Radio Dispatch. Stand and address. Do NOT physically intervene.</p>

# PROTECTING YOURSELF & YOUR LICENSE

## Section 4: The "Fight" Protocol

**Your job is to secure the vehicle, not break up the fight.**

- 1. Secure the Bus:** Pull over, Brake, Hazards.
- 2. Radio Dispatch:** "I have a physical altercation on Bus #\_\_. Requesting assistance at [Location]."
- 3. Command:** Use PA system: "STOP. SEPARATE. I have called for help."
- 4. Wait:** Do NOT leave your seat to touch students unless a life is in immediate danger.

## Section 5: The "CYA" Checklist (Cover Your Actions)

**If an incident occurs, can you check these boxes?**

- I stopped the bus as soon as it was safe.
- I radioed dispatch during the event, not after.
- I used verbal commands, not physical force.
- I wrote a detailed report within 24 hours (Times, Names, Quotes).
- I requested a copy of my report for my own records.

# PAGE 3: THE LEADER'S IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

(For the Director — Do Not Laminate for the Bus)

## TO THE TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR:

### How to Use This Tool to Improve Retention

Giving your drivers the Visor Card is Step 1. Step 2 is ensuring your office supports them when they use it.

### The "Closed Loop" Promise

The #1 cause of driver dissatisfaction regarding behavior is lack of follow-up. Implement this simple workflow:

- 1. The 24-Hour Rule:** Every referral must be acknowledged within 24 hours. Even a quick email to the driver: "Received. We are reviewing it."
- 2. The Outcome Report:** Drivers do not need to know the student's medical history, but they DO need to know the operational outcome.
  - **Bad:** (Silence)
  - **Good:** "Student has been suspended for 3 days." OR "We spoke to the parent; please log if it happens again."
- 3. The Escalation Path:** If a driver submits 3 referrals for the same student with no change, a supervisor must ride along or view the video to create a safety plan.

### Sample Accountability Framework:

Offense	Response
1st Offense	Verbal Warning + Parent Contact
2nd Offense	Written Referral + Assigned Seat
3rd Offense	Bus Suspension (1-3 Days) + Behavior Contract
4th Offense	Removal from transportation

Use this guide to start a conversation with your building principals about the reality of bus safety.