When it comes to School Buses:
Safety is a Topmost Priority in Eastport-South Manor School District

For all Eastport-South Manor School District students, learning bus safety is an ongoing part of the District curriculum. In conjunction with the district’s contracted bus service, First Student, numerous classroom safety lessons and two drills are practiced early in the school year, and a third drill—as a reminder—is held in the spring.

Whether or not they ride the bus, all students participate in these drills during the school hours. Our teachers instruct the students on the do’s and don’ts of:

- Waiting for the bus at least 10 minutes prior to arrival
- Waiting at the bus stop in a safe manner
- Inclement weather and the dangers of poor visibility, icy conditions, and strong winds
- Boarding the bus in an orderly and safe manner
- The hazards of running for the bus
- Students should not eat or drink anything on the bus
- Students should tell the driver/staff if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable
- Behavior on the bus and proper seating while the bus is in motion
- Emergency situations which include knowing the location of all emergency exits, emergency equipment, and how to evacuate the bus in an orderly manner.

Dedicated to providing the safest service available, First Student has strict guidelines for their school bus drivers. Each driver is required to have the following:

- An in-depth interview and personal evaluation
- A clean pre-employment drug test and ongoing random drug and alcohol testing
- Fingerprinting and a criminal background check
- Good character references
- A commercial driver’s license and a clean motor vehicle record
- Up to 60 hours of in-house classroom/road training
- Internal and external Road Reviews and a Peer System Review
- Annual recertification, physical exams, and road supervision
- Complete annual training and refresher courses.

Our buses may be equipped with video cameras as a safety precaution for our students. This enhanced safety program is part of the new initiative in bus safety. Not only will the digital video cameras that record pictures and sound serve as a deterrent to misbehavior on buses, it will allow for timely and effective disciplinary response, as evidenced by the recordings, to those rare occasions when incidents do occur. By law [8 NYCRR #156.9(d)(1)], school districts can use video cameras on school buses to ensure the safety of the drivers and passengers.

First Student would also like to assure the District that it regularly addresses another aspect of safety—sanitation of the vehicles. Routine school bus cleaning is done to environmental surfaces so as to reduce levels of bacteria.

So, next time those yellow school buses roll by, the Eastport-South Manor community can feel confident. Bus safety is indeed a topmost priority in Eastport-South Manor Central School District, thanks to First Student’s bus service.