



Announcer:

It's time for the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

Ken Rayner:

Welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. I'm your host, Ken Rayner. On this episode of the podcast, we're joined again by Doug Heintz, Vice President of High-Risk Activity Training and Operations at IHSA, to discuss school bus safety passenger management. Okay, Doug, you're the one that suggested this topic for a podcast. And I'm really interested, as a parent who for about 12 years had their children riding on a school bus to and from school, I can appreciate that this is an important topic. Particularly when you're going to give 50 or so children to one adult and have them manage everything. So, I'm really interested to hear a little bit more about this podcast. Doug, why did you suggest it? Why do you think it's important? Let's get into that.

Doug Heintz:

Perfect. Thanks, Ken. Well, certainly school bus safety and passenger management is something that I'm very interested in. I spent 14 years in the school bus business. The last chunk of time I was involved in safety and training. But what we know about anybody who works at a school bus company is you have a B license, that's a license for a school bus, and you'll spend lots of time doing spare routes, that sort of thing. And I think over the years, what became very apparent to me is passenger management is absolutely an integral piece of safe school bus operation. I think some of the strategies that we're going to talk about and strategies that I used in the school bus made me realize this passenger management piece can go quite well. And maybe the other reason why it's timely to talk about this now is we're coming up on another school bus, or I should say another school year. And as such, we're going to have new drivers in seats. We're going to have potentially school administrators that haven't dealt with some of those issues. So yeah, excited about chatting about that today.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent. And you just mentioned a couple of positions, school bus drivers, and school administrators. What is the intended audience for this podcast, Doug?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, I think when I put this together quite a few years ago, the intended audience was really around drivers. But I think what we're going to talk about today, there's some going to be some really helpful tips for the operator or the company that supports the driver. The individual who might take that call to have to deal with a complaint perhaps as it relates to student management.

And I think that school administrators, I think it's aimed at them as well. And I think what we know is the transportation element at schools sometimes comes and goes, depending on new schools being built and or portables and all of that sort of thing. And so, maybe there's a school administrator that really hasn't had to deal with this in a significant way. And then absolutely I think parents will be able to pick up some good tips here as well. Recognizing we not only have maybe new drivers, maybe we have kids that have never ridden a bus before, so how do parents support their kid and ultimately the driver as well to make sure that that part of the job goes well?

Ken Rayner:

All right, so I've never been a school bus driver, Doug, and I've never been a school administrator, but I've definitely been a parent with children on school buses, so I'm going to play that role in this podcast. All right, so let's start off with the one for me that is the biggest question. We're typically loading somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 to 60 children on these larger school buses with one adult, one adult. And I can't even imagine that scenario that if we dropped off 50 kids at a birthday party and said to one adult, "Okay, you're in charge. Good luck. Take care of them." We wouldn't do that to somebody. So, where do we start with this in terms of how do you ... When you're providing 50 kids and early in the morning or after school on a school bus and you have one adult that's in charge of care and control of those kids and the safety on the bus, where do you start?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, absolutely. I should maybe even paint a picture of the vast range of skills that a school bus driver needs to have. So, *Highway Traffic Act*, ministry of transportation expectation or requirement to do a daily vehicle inspection list so they have to have a good mechanical understanding of that vehicle. It is a large commercial motor vehicle that they're needing to take through typically city streets, often rural streets, so weather and traffic and all of that sort of thing comes into play. It's a very long vehicle, we're getting into neighborhoods with small streets. So, a lot of skills there on the mechanical and actually vehicle operation side. And just as you said, on top of that, and we'll use the birthday party of 50 kids is inside the bus, and they are tasked with making sure that that part goes well while they have the responsibility of driving that large commercial motor vehicle.

So, having a plan, making sure that we understand the strategies is an important piece. And I'll go back to when I was in the business and I was thinking, "So how do we support drivers with this?" And I started thinking about, what are the strategies and what are the words that we'll use for the strategies to be able to make it go well? And so, I came up with navigating the seven Cs of student management or passenger management, and those seven Cs are create, control, clarity, consistency, collaboration, consequences, and communication. And we'll talk a little bit about all of those. And so, I think that's a great place to start about how we make that go well.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. So I believe, I mean, I've got a bunch of questions that I'm really excited to ask you about. Again, being a former parent of kids on school buses for 12 or so years. So, let's go through that, and I'm sure that you're going to be able to connect the dots with those seven Cs. So, what about the preparation piece? Let's get into that now. We're in the summer, school and kids that are going to be heading back

to school after Labour Day. School bus operators and drivers are probably going to start to prepare soon and before the kids board the bus for the first time so they can all enjoy a fun, safe, healthy experience. What preparation are those school bus operators and drivers taking? What's the preparation, Doug?

Doug Heintz:

Well, so the summer is a very busy time for school bus operations, absolutely. And part of that is getting drivers up to speed, licensed, getting them to understand the routes. And the one piece that they can't really prepare, as far as having live bodies in the bus, is the student management piece. So, I can drive the route, I can drive the bus, I can make sure that I'm qualified from that perspective. But the student management piece is something that school bus operators, the company, and the driver really needs to give some good thought too. So, our first C is create, and one of the things that we need to create is a plan on how to deal with student management issues. I think it's not good not to have a plan, because in fact they are kids and what we know is kids will have behaviors, whatever that might be.

And so we need to have some really good thought prior to getting them on the bus to know how it is that we're going to deal with that. And so the driver, it's absolutely important for the operator, it's important for them to understand how they're going to support drivers, how to prepare them well prior to the kids getting on the bus. School administrators, especially if they have not had transportation as an element at their school previously, they want to be thinking about, "So how are we going to deal with these issues? What are some of the things that they will put in place?" And then parents, making sure that they have a plan on how to coach their child to be a responsible, respectful passenger as well. So, that's a lot of what we can do before the kids get on the bus. But I think one of the things that's so simple for a driver to do, and that is create a positive atmosphere. And that can happen as simple as saying good morning and giving them a smile.

I think the McDonald's board used to say smiles are free. I think quick, simple to do. I've often thought about the fact that in some cases the bus driver may be the first adult they've seen that morning. Parents are gone already because of work and the child gets up, gets themselves to the bus. So, what a great way to start their day, have the drivers say good morning and give them a smile. I think the other thing for drivers to think about is kindness, compassion, understanding and respect.

And I think of respect is such an important one. And the driver is the adult on the bus, so I would say respect has to start with the adults. And my experience is that that always comes back to the adults when it's extended to kids. I've heard people say often, and certainly as it relates to driving a school bus, there's a concern about the passenger piece and the comment is, "Kids aren't the way they used to be." And my response is, "Actually, I think kids are exactly the way they've always been." I think that in some cases adults have not necessarily shown them an appropriate way to act, interact, react, and as such, some of those behaviors come out. So, go back to driver extends respect, my experience is, it comes back to them absolutely.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. So now in the event that the school bus driver hasn't extended that type of respect and the bus pulls up to your stop and you're a parent waiting and the bus is just out of control, it's loud, it's boisterous, the driver doesn't appear to have control of the bus. As a parent, what are those steps? Or

even as the driver and the operator, what are those steps to address the issue and gain control of the vehicle?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, so you talked about the parents, and I think that if a parent sees that, absolutely it's important for them to pass along what they're seeing to the operator. And that's not about getting the driver in trouble, it's around extending support. Is the operator aware of what is happening on that bus and or the school or the school board might have interest in that, because again, it's around making sure that people are supported in their role? So yeah, absolutely. The next C is control. And I think I'll look at it from a couple of perspectives, and one would be you were talking about getting control back when things are a little bit out of control, but I'd like to speak about keeping it in control. Because there absolutely is that possibility from the beginning of the year as well. I think as human beings we crave attention and kids absolutely do. And whatever behaviour gets attention is the behaviour that continues.

I think I always love to look at things from a positive perspective. And if I'm a new driver, A, I will say, if there are behaviours that are unsafe they need to be dealt with, but generally speaking an a.m. route is quieter because of the kids are half asleep, half awake, whichever one you want to say. And if I'm driving that first a.m. route, I'm observing, I'm looking for ... I want to catch them doing something correct. And so, maybe I'm going to drive the first day, I'm going to drive the a.m. of the second day and at the school when I'm picking them up in the afternoon. Before I leave, I get up and say, "I just want to talk to you about something I've been observing for the last day and a half." And the kids absolutely think that they're going to be told what they're not doing well, what they need to do.

But what a great thing for the driver to say, "You know what, I'm pretty new at this, but I just want to say I really appreciate that you loaded quickly, got in your seat, it wasn't excessively noisy, you're staying seated until the buses stopped in the afternoon. That's important so that we don't have people falling in the aisle." Whatever that is. I'm looking to praise them for something that they did well. Generally speaking, I'd be surprised if you couldn't find something. Because I think all of a sudden we have their ear in a way that we would not if we started with the negative stuff. So, it's behavior that has got attention, it happens to be positive, and now there's potential that they want that sort of attention in future and those positive behaviors are reinforced and maybe they continue.

The other thing about that is if you have their ear, you have the opportunity to say, "You know what? There's one other thing that you could help me with." And think about sitting, standing at the front of a bus, and if it's an elementary school, I've asked this question and the response is always so positive. "Who would like to help me do my job better or as well as possible?" And the hands go up. It's amazing how positive it can be. If I'd said, "I really like how you loaded quickly, the noise level wasn't excessive," you have their ear now to say, "There's just one other thing that you could help me with. Can we work on that together?" And generally speaking the heads nod. And if that goes well, absolutely, I'm standing up the next afternoon when I have that captive audience before we leave and I'm going to tell about that. So that's around how do we find positive and keep control.

Now, I don't want to be sitting here with rose-colored glasses on and say that routes don't happen where there are things that are out of control, because that absolutely can happen as well. Now, I would say that a critical error that happens with new drivers is they don't want to talk to the kids, so they get

the school administrator on the bus, they tell them what's expected, and then they leave. Ken, where's the authority when the principal teacher otherwise gets off the bus and goes back in the school? Yeah, it's in the school, absolutely. So the driver goes down the road and two blocks later we're out of control again. And so, having a school administrator on the bus when the driver is speaking to the kids is absolutely important. If I have a bus that's out of control, A, you need to show the kids that you're the one that's in charge. You need to make them aware of your expectations, you need them to make them aware of the school board's expectations.

And then I'm going to ask that administrator on the bus and I've had them say, "What do you want me to say?" And my comment is, "I actually don't want you to say anything. I just want you to be here to see that I've addressed it appropriately." We get buy-in from the kids such that down the road if there's a challenge or it starts to get out of control again, then that school administrator is an ally who can say, "I was there, you all agreed, we got buy-in, what's happening here?" So making sure that the driver is doing the talking is just, it's just a really critical piece.

Ken Rayner:

Love it, Doug, love it. And you know what, I will admit as a parent I tend to, sometimes talking to the kids I gravitate to the negative, I nag them. And I can tell you that a lot of times they just tune me out. So, starting with the positive and getting the kids' buy-in and getting them interested and then asking for their assistance. Wow, that sounds like some terrific advice. Let me ask you this, because I'm picturing the school bus driver getting up in front of all these kids. And you've got 50 kids on a school bus. Yes, sure, a teacher may have 30 kids in a classroom, but those children are most likely all of the same age. But now you're talking to, you're addressing a school bus where you have four and five-year-olds in kindergarten all the way up to 13-year-olds in grade eight. That's a wide difference in terms of the communication style or the way they're going to communicate to those kids or the way the kids are going to receive that information.

So, how does a school bus driver deal with that? How do they deal with that wide range of, you're talking to a kindergarten child in the seat in front of you and a grade eight or all the way at the very, very back of the bus?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, it's a great question. Clarity is the next C I'd like to talk about. And I think that the kiss theory absolutely applies here. So, instructions need to be short and simple, and that's for the Kindergarten and grade one kids at the front of the bus, and it's for the older kids at the back of the bus as well. I think that if a driver is a little bit agitated about what's going on and they've got six, eight things that they want to talk to the kids about and they rip them off as they say, "This is what I expect of you." I don't know that it's ever happened, but I can guess that it may have that one kid looks at the other and says, "What did he say again?" "Yeah, I don't know. I didn't catch all those. He said something about staying seated at the end." But so I think instead of going with a laundry list of what's expected, if there are issues that you really want to address, the most hazardous one or two initially, and once you get those under control, you can move on to others.

And I'll go with, "Really folks, I need you to be seated until the bus is at full stop on the p.m. route, because I can't have you standing in the aisle." Maybe it's a little bit about noise. There could be

something about they're not getting seated quickly in the morning, and that's an issue, because I've got traffic stopped and all of that sort of thing. But I think that if that one is less of a hazard, I'm going to leave that one go for a little bit later so I can get up and say a day or two down the road, "Hey, thanks folks. I see that you're paying attention to staying seated until ... Can we talk about?" And then you can bring up the next one. So, keeping instructions short and simple absolutely is a great strategy to start to chip away at what it is that we want to deal with.

Ken Rayner:

Bite-sized chunks. Love it, Doug. Great suggestion. Okay, so we also know that kids seem to have this innate sense of what is right and what is wrong. If they're being told or taken to task on something that they're pretty sure they really shouldn't be getting in trouble for this, kids sometimes have a hard time with that. Where I'm going with this is, what you were describing earlier is a school bus driver in a perfect scenario, right? School bus driver gets up and they've had a great day and everything's going well, and hey, they're able to communicate this great talk to the kids and they tell them how great the kids, "We appreciate your behaviour" and all this stuff. So that's a perfect scenario, but we all know that all kinds of other stuff go on during the day.

It could be weather issues, traffic issues, moods of the kids, the bus driver had a bad day in the morning, spilled coffee on themselves, whatever it would be. How does the bus driver stay consistent, with their approach to managing the school bus? That's a tough one, day in and day out. How do they do that?

Doug Heintz:

Well, it is tough, for sure, and consistency is our next C. I think what you're talking about, those reactions to situations, that's just a tough one, and it's just one to be very aware of and maybe catch yourself as best you can, because I think that the same behavior yesterday, today, and tomorrow should get the same reaction or response from the driver. When Ken does it yesterday and I say, "Hey Ken, can you sit down," and Doug does it today and the driver rips a strip off of Doug, then everybody's like, I think the driver's not being so consistent there. So I think just an awareness of what your level of expectation is and being aware of how we react to those situations. So the reaction and also maybe what I expect of kids, because I think, well, maybe I'm going to go back to the beginning around just making sure we're following the rules as laid out by the school board, the school and the school administrator.

I think that that's just a great place to start. Because if I'm lenient on one of the rules and I'm sick tomorrow and a spare driver drives the bus tomorrow, that driver's going to apply the rules as written and the kids are like, "What are you talking about? That's never been an issue for the first three months." So, that's unfair to the kids and that's unfair to the spare driver who's being put in that situation. So, making sure that we're following those rules is a really important strategy around the consistency piece. Now, maybe connecting school administrators with the consistency piece, being aware of the respective school administrator's plan on how to deal with student management issues. What we all know is different schools have different school populations. And potential to address things in a different way at a school where there's kids that have special needs as opposed to maybe the broader population.

So, what a great way to be consistent with what the school wants to do before you have an issue. Maybe in the first couple of weeks, maybe not on the first day of school, but in the first couple of weeks to go into the school and say, "Hey, I'm Doug. I'm driving route one two three. I just want to have a conversation about how you want to deal with student management issues so that we're both on the same page." I think that's an important consistency piece, for sure. And I guess then within what the school is expecting, the plan they've put in place to go back to expectations and reactions. Yeah, it's important. Maybe one other, if there's drivers that are listening that are going to have their own kids on the bus, which sometimes happens, especially in rural routes, there's a place where those kids need to be following the rules, because whatever the driver's kids get away with, the rest of the kids have license to do that as well.

But as you said, kids do have an innate sense of justice and fairness and they'll be watching the driver for that. So, best we can, we really want to work towards that consistency piece.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent. Thank you for that. All right, the door's closed, the driver is now pulling away and I guess they're on school bus island, because they are by themselves, right? One adult, 50-odd kids. What can a driver do when they're out there by themselves, Doug? What resources can they leverage? Is there assistance they can expect as they conduct the job of managing the school bus by themselves? How do they approach that?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, collaboration is a very important part. As you said, school bus island, they are physically out there by themselves, but I think we don't want to have them psychologically feeling like they're out there by themselves. And so, maybe I'll go back to something you said at the beginning. How do we prepare for this prior to getting out there? And so, I think that preparation with your manager ... Well, with your manager to understand how is it that we're going to deal with the student management piece is a really important piece. Not to feel like you're out there by yourself, but once you're out and doing the route, then connecting with school administrators, the teacher that might be in the loading zone. There's various ways, and I am going to tell you a story about a school in Kitchener that we had kids going to, there were various needs looked after at that school, kids with various needs I should say.

And there were some kids that were behavioural and the teacher came up with a little strategy and got the driver's help. They were twins. They would sometimes act up on the bus. And as such, when the kids got off, the teacher said, "All I need you to do is to give a calendar, a little pocket calendar to the driver. And the driver would open it to the date and there would either be a check mark or an X." And if there was a check mark, the kid was praised in the school and was allowed to do some activities that they really liked to do. If there was an X, it was a message that the ride didn't go so well and then the child to be responsible for their actions and there were some consequences that went with that. I know that that driver felt like, "I'm having a positive impact on a kid to understand being responsible for actions and consequences that go with that."

Now, I don't know that that's possible in all situations, but just it's an example that I remember from the past that I think there are opportunities for those sorts of collaborations. Now, when we talk about parents, I think we want to be careful about how we collaborate with parents, because I would say

generally speaking it's discouraged as the parent's judgment and knowledge of a situation is going to be clouded by what their child told them. I'm probably not going to go home and say, "Yeah, you know what, I was running around on the aisle and when the driver stopped for the drop-off, I fell." They will just say, "The driver hammered on the brakes and I fell into the aisle." And maybe just a note for parents and to go back to painting a picture of what a driver's responsible for. If they're doing a pickup or a drop-off, they have the school bus warning lights going and the stop arm extended, traffic needs to stop, oncoming from behind.

In some cases we're on fairly busy roads doing that. And it's the driver's responsibility to ensure that any child approaching the bus, getting on the bus, they might be crossing, kids across the street. They need to ensure that they have a safe situation for that to happen. You can imagine that a parent coming up to express a concern, ask a question, or otherwise can be distracting. And so, I would encourage parents, unless the situation you're on a side street and there's nothing going on, I'd refrain from talking to the driver. It's better to call in to the company to maybe have a conversation about a question that you might want to have addressed. Again, we don't want to have the driver distracted from their most important task.

Ken Rayner:

Doug, thanks so much for painting that picture, because I've never really thought of all of the aspects that a school bus driver would have to deal with as they're pulling up to a stop, particularly if it's on a busy road. So, not only do they have all of those kids behind them that they're responsible for, but now they're taking a look at traffic, they're making sure that cars are stopping as indicated with the flashing lights, that the hazards aren't there as the kids cross the road. Wow, I didn't even really give all that consideration in terms of how much responsibility is going on and what that bus driver is doing. So, I definitely have more empathy for them in terms of next time I see a school bus stop, so thank you for that. And you've been speaking really positively about creating an intended experience for the school bus. But I think we could agree that if you have 50 plus kids on one vehicle with one adult, that over the course of an entire school year we're going to have instances of misbehaving that are going to require correction.

I think it's almost a guarantee. I can think of every single year my kids were on a school bus, there was always one big issue that came up or an issue that had to be addressed. So, what would you say are the best approaches for correcting behavior on a school bus?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, that leads to our next C, and that's consequences. It is an important piece around correcting behaviours, and I think that communicating expectations and potential consequences in a clear, consistent way is important. I think that I would always suggest to a driver that it's important to communicate that it's the child's actions that require them to write a behavior report. It's not the driver deciding they want to, it's the actions that prompt that response. It is their responsibility to make sure that that is passed along in an important, or I should say, just passing it along to the school so that they can address that. Now, maybe one thing that I think I'll toss out in that is that in some cases, based on what's happening on the bus, and if the driver's frustrated, they might toss out a threat that they can't follow through on.

"Kid, you are so off the bus." And then you get to the school and the principal says, "You know what? I'm aware of a difficult home situation. I really want that kid at school. And as such, we'll deal with that in the school." But what's happened is the principal has trumped the driver. The driver said something that they can't follow through on. So I think it's important to simply say, "I need to report the behavior to the school." And it is absolutely important for the driver to report. I think there are situations where when the school board would call me and say they've got a complaint about what happened on a bus, and they'd paint the picture, I would talk to the driver and the driver would say, "What do you mean? I've been talking to that kid for two weeks about making sure that you're staying seated," or whatever that issue might have been.

And then the question is, "Who have you told about that?" "I haven't told anybody about that." Well, that's the error. And so maybe I'll just say for a parent, a driver doesn't report a child to get them kicked off the bus. That's not the intent. It's to drive positive behavior, better behavior, and also to create a track record. A school administrator will not remove privileges of getting to and from the school on a bus if they don't have a track record. So, a driver can't go in and say, "It's been happening for the last two weeks. Got to get that kid off the bus." Well, write up a report today, today's day one, and now we need to establish a track record. So, that report piece is absolutely important for the driver to follow through on. And every school board, every school will have a form to be able to fill out and pass off.

And I'll just say that in some cases it's not possible for the driver to go in and have a conversation with that school administrator, because they've made school bussing a lot more efficient. They have staggered start times, they do transfers mid-route. They do double runs. I've done the elementary school and now I'm going to go pick up another group that's going to another school. So the driver's ability to go in and have a conversation in the moment is challenging. So, ensuring that they use the report form and then get some follow up on that, and I'll talk a little bit more about follow up on those report forms in our next C.

Ken Rayner:

Oh, the next C, okay. So well, just to add on that, Doug, maybe for those school bus drivers who maybe are reluctant to take that step in discipline, I remember a very wise person many, many years ago sharing with me, "That discipline when applied correctly is meant to correct behavior, not punish the individual." If it's always done through the guise of the correction of the behavior, hopefully that makes it a little easier on those school bus drivers who maybe don't want to get the kids in trouble or don't want to have them in trouble with the administrator, the parent, whoever. Just remembering it's about correcting behavior, not punishment, right?

Doug Heintz:

I would agree. I would agree. Absolutely.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. So, you mentioned one more C, and that's good, because as you may know I failed grade 10 math, and so I've been trying to count how many Cs we're up to, and I'm glad you told me that we've accomplished six out of the seven, because I'm not sure I was counting that way. We're off to the last C. So Doug, what is the last C that we have to cover here?

Doug Heintz:

Yeah, last C is communication. And I'll say that communication plays into many of the other Cs that we've talked about already, and it really is the big one in my years in the school bus business, when we had a situation that we had to investigate to understand what happened. When the issues were boiled down, one of the things that was always left was communication was lacking in some sort of way. So it was miscommunicated, maybe it wasn't understood properly, or possibly the individuals involved, there was no communication. So, making sure that the appropriate parties are informed in an appropriate way of the facts, developments and any changes that are happening as well, it's just it's very important. Any bus has a two-way radio. And so, they have ability to connect with their dispatch and maybe indicate that they need to have a conversation with the safety individual around what's happening on the bus.

And to your comment just a few seconds ago in regards to a driver feeling bad about reporting somebody, I think that absolutely happens. And knowing, flipping it to the positive and communicating what's going on, because really what we're trying to do is help that student behave in a more appropriate way, that maybe helps to make you think about it in a very different sort of way. Now, the communication, it can simply be a verbal update to a school, the teacher, the administrator of those misbehavior reports, absolutely part of important communication. Verbal updates to your manager about something that's been challenging that's maybe moving in one direction or another. And I'm going to go back to the positive here again, be sure to communicate victories to your school as well.

If I'm a driver, I've had some challenges, we've had conversations about expected behavior and it's going well, I'm going to ask that administrator to come on the bus, and while they're on the bus I'm going to stand up and say to the kids, "We had a conversation last month about whatever it is that we needed to deal with, and I just want to say, you've done a marvelous job. We're enjoying the bus ride, we're doing it safely, we're quiet, we're staying seated, all of that sort of thing." What a good thing to be able to say in front of a teacher or the principal. And it helps to drive that behavior. And there's also a level of expectation. They can do it, and so we really want and need them to continue with that as well.

Last one about communication, maybe that I would add is, if you've submitted a misbehaviour report form to a school, and this is for drivers and this is for school administrators as well, it's really important for you to get something back to understand what's happened. Because it might be happening in the school, the kids on the bus, if you're not told, the thought is, "Wow, I've been writing these reports up for the last couple of weeks and nothing's going on. I'm going to stop writing up those reports." In the absence of evidence that something is happening, then we'll assume nothing's happening, could be happening into school. So, I think such that the driver continues to write up those reports and communicate with the school and their company, getting some sort of information back is in fact very important for the driver.

And maybe my last thought in regards to this whole conversation about passenger management is, if you're in the school bus business, delivering school children is your business. And so, instead of finding ways to get that challenging child off the bus, make it your personal challenge to encourage positive behavior in that child. Employ some of the things that we've talked about to make it go better, because the world inside your bus will be a better place for it. And I think as a school bus driver they have lots of really positive impacts on kids. And so, maybe I would even say your communities in the world might be a better place for it, absolutely.

Ken Rayner:

Right on. Doug, thank you very, very much. I have two takeaways from this podcast. One is that when we started this podcast, boy, I felt if I was in the shoes of a school bus driver and we were starting to talk about 50 kids and being alone, that could be a little bit of a scary proposition. But as you went through with all of your suggestions, I felt myself, if I was that school bus driver, my confidence growing, because now we have a plan. And we have a means and a methodology and able to deal with this and that this can be a positive experience for everybody. So thank you for that. And then also, thank you for, I think sharing, for at least parents like myself, a sense of empathy for the school bus driver. Because I felt as you went through the actions of the day and what the school bus driver goes through, for allowed me to put myself in their shoes.

And the way you described it are things that maybe I didn't know about what goes on in a school bus during the day, or what a school bus driver has to deal with. And I feel like I've got a lot more empathy for the school bus driver, and maybe my patience is going to be a little bit better next time I'm waiting behind something like a school bus, or a school bus is taking a long period of time. It's like, "You know what? That school bus driver could be dealing with a whole host of things. I'm just going to sit here and be patient and be supportive." So thank you very much, Doug. That was fantastic. Some great information, some great guidance and tips. Thank you for joining us on the *IHSA Safety Podcast* again, Doug.

Doug Heintz:

Thank you, Ken. Glad to be here.

Ken Rayner:

And thank you to the listeners for listening to this *IHSA Safety Podcast*. Hope you get a lot out of it. Be sure to subscribe and "like" us on your podcast channel. And visit us at ihsa.ca for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

Announcer:

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