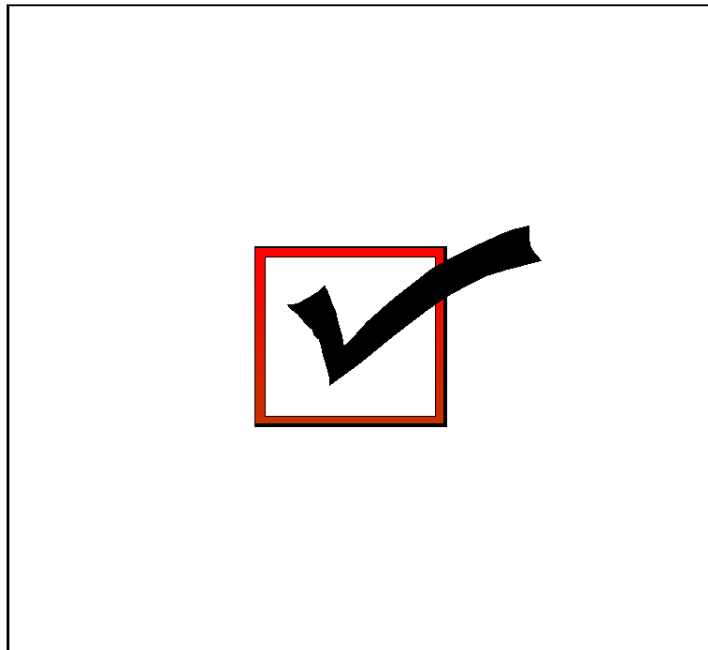


**2025-2026 FORT BENTON
SCHOOL DISTRICT #1**

EXTRACURRICULAR

**TRANSPORTATION
HANDBOOK**



1st reading: 7-8-2025

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 FORT BENTON, MONTANA 2023-24

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORY

BUS BARN 622-5392
Bus Barn Toll Free # 1-800-884-7492

<u>Drivers</u>	<u>Cell</u>	<u>Home</u>
Paul Benhart, Transportation Supervisor	465-8941	
Darrel Benjamin	750-2369	622-3637
Marvin Brodock	788-5555	622-5329
Harry Buckingham	949-0848	622-3293
Justin Cartwright	231-2454	
Thad Kaiser	291-1770	
Jim O'Hara	799-2992	
Vicky O'Hara	899-4529	
Kim Singer	621-3676	
Wes Skerritt	621-3880	622-3879
Kim Singer	621-3676	
Jeff Tackes	231-4833	622-5383
Karie Thomas	836-0914	

<u>Administration</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Home</u>
Patrick Hould, Dist. Supt. / MS-HS Principal	622-5112	253-249-1113
Jamie Ball, AD	622-5112	868-3071
Roxanne Benjamin, Elementary Principal	622-3721	
Cali O'Hara, Business Mgr.	622-5691	

Trustees - Transportation Committee

Darin Arganbright - Chairperson	H: 622-5286	C:899-0264
Brant Hasbrouck		761-8761
Dusty Schuler		788-8882
Will Scott		366-9289

Sheriff's Office 622-5451

INTRODUCTION

Each year School District Number One travels more than 50,000 miles to provide activity trip transportation to 300 elementary, middle, and high school students. Every effort is made to assure the parent and student that the bus ride is as safe as possible. This handbook covers rules and policies for extra and co-curricular pupil transportation.

Coaches, sponsors, parents, and students are asked to read and discuss the contents of this bulletin.

You can help make each school bus ride a safe one. May we have your cooperation?

A copy of this handbook will be carried on all District-owned buses.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

All bus drivers in School District #1 receive periodic instruction in the safe methods of operating a bus. New drivers receive instruction in the operation of buses, rules and regulations of the transportation program, and in the direction of school bus passengers. Fort Benton School bus drivers must meet the state of Montana School Bus Driver Qualifications (MCA 20-10-103; ARM 10.64.201). Safety meetings with the bus drivers are held several times each school year. Special training is provided at other Montana locations. The entire fleet has continuous over-the-road supervision.

Fort Benton Public Schools Seatbelt Program

1. It is the goal of Fort Benton Public Schools to provide the safest student/passenger transportation system available.
2. Fort Benton Public Schools requires that all students/passengers riding the school district buses comply with state law regarding the use of seatbelts.
3. If a school bus is equipped with seatbelts for students/passenger in accordance with FMVSS No 222, then a student/passenger being transported in a seat with seatbelts must be properly restrained with a seatbelt.
4. Drivers, coaches, teachers, or chaperones will announce prior to the bus leaving that each student/passenger needs to be in their seat and properly restrained with a seatbelt.
5. Students/passengers refusing to use seatbelts in a legal and safe manner will be subject to school district disciplinary actions. Repeated refusal to wear seatbelts will result in suspended riding privileges from the bus.
 - a. Consequences: Any student/passenger refusing to wear a seat belt will receive one verbal warning. If escalated, they will receive a written Disciplinary Report and will be assigned to a seat next to a coach/chaperone. Further reports will result in automatic suspension from the school bus beginning with a 3-day bus suspension and increases from there.

6. There are times when it will be up to the coach/chaperones discretion if a student/passenger can momentarily unbuckle for to retrieval of items from the above storage or to talk with the coach/chaperone.

7. Benefits. Students/passengers are safer when properly restrained by seatbelts.

NON INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS

Activity Trips

All students transported for any school activities, regardless of numbers of students being transported, must be transported on Montana Highway Patrol Approved School Buses or Activity Buses owned and maintained by the school district. Only in a special case or circumstance may this policy be waived by the District Transportation Director.

All activity buses will carry a minimum of one adult supervisor, who will be responsible for the demeanor and conduct of the student riders.

1. Drivers are expected to have the bus at the loading area at least 15 minutes before departure time.
2. The driver will assist in loading luggage, uniforms and band instruments. Do not block the emergency door. Passengers are not allowed to open/close the side storage compartment doors of the activity bus. This is the driver's responsibility.
3. The driver is in full charge of the bus and the passenger's safety. The driver makes all decisions concerning road conditions and safe travel, whether to continue or return due to weather/safety conditions. The driver will check with the coach in regard to bus needs while at the activity.
The Coach has the total authority over the drivers concerning schedule changes, stops other than emergencies, and pick up times while at an activity. The driver's job is to get the bus passengers from Point A to Point B safely and while at the activity avail themselves completely to the activity and the needs of the students as determined by the coach.
4. Behavior of the pupils is the coaches'/sponsors' responsibility. If the students are too loud, or otherwise distract the driver, the driver will notify the coach/sponsor to re-establish order.
5. Buses are parked only in authorized areas at other schools.
6. The bus is kept locked to protect the riders' property.
7. School bus drivers may not exceed the posted Speed limits. Drivers must obey all posted speed limits and are not to exceed 70 MPH on secondary highways or on the Interstate, and 45 MPH on gravel. The Driver, road conditions and weather will determine a safe speed. There is a fifteen mile per hour speed limit within school areas.
8. According to State School Laws no one may drive a school bus unless certified.
9. The buses will not be left unattended with passengers on board or standing outside the bus.

10. The activity bus driver has the responsibility and the authority to maintain discipline on the bus when the sponsor is not on board.
11. Coaches and sponsors will have the riders help pick up trash.
12. No one is to stand on the bus while it is in motion. No exceptions. Drivers that allow this to occur will be reprimanded as will those who refuse to sit. **STANDEES** (while in motion) **WILL BE PROHIBITED ON ALL BUSES.**
13. Windows may be opened upon the discretion of the driver and/or the coach/sponsor.
14. Riders are allowed to eat food or snacks or drink beverages on the bus. This policy will be revoked by the administration if problems arise due to this privilege. Any in-shell foods are not allowed to be eaten on any bus trips. These include sunflower seeds, pistachios, in-shell peanuts, etc. No fountain drinks, only drinks with lids, which are re-sealable. No exceptions.
The Coaches/Advisors will be held accountable if this occurs.
15. Rest stops will be scheduled on longer trips.
16. **Spiked shoes** are not to be worn onto any school owned bus.
17. Bus driver's children/spouse are not to ride the bus unless written permission is granted from the Transportation Director. Coach's children/spouse are not to ride the bus unless written permission is granted from the Athletic Director.
18. The School District expects to be compensated for any malicious damage caused to a bus by a passenger.
19. The riding privilege of a passenger may be suspended or revoked for violation of any of these rules or for conduct which is detrimental to the safe operation of the bus.
20. Good conduct aboard the bus is of extreme importance. Riders should regard the bus as another school room and act accordingly, except that conversation in normal tones is permitted.

Drivers and sponsors are required to report misbehavior on the bus to building principals. Such reports will result in one of several possibilities. Examples are:

1. A warning about misbehavior.
2. Suspension of riding privileges until further notice (pending contact by parents.) If a student has their riding privileges suspended, they may not participate in activities. This discipline falls under general school suspension guidelines.
3. Permanent revocation of riding privileges.

The above listed items are not processes, but an example.

Prior to Boarding the Bus:

1. Be on time.
2. Stay out of the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. Do not participate in horseplay or destroy surrounding property.
4. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before attempting to board the bus.
5. Do not run toward the bus in an effort to be the first to board the bus. If you have to cross the roadway to board the bus, wait for the driver to signal you to cross the road, then walk to the bus.

While Riding the Bus:

1. There will be no pushing or scuffling while the bus is loading.
2. Riders will keep arms, hands, head and all parts of the body inside the bus when in motion.
3. Riders will keep books, packages, equipment or other objects out of the aisles at all times. Articles should either be placed under the seat, on the racks, or held in the laps of the pupils. Use underneath storage units first, if available. Do not block the emergency exits.
4. Talk should be in conversational tones at all times. There should be no shouting or loud talking which may distract the bus driver. Riders should not carry on unnecessary conversation with the driver.
5. Riders shall not shout at a passerby or get involved with students at other schools by harassment from the bus.
6. Scuffling, playing or fighting on the bus will not be allowed. This may endanger the lives of all the riders.
7. Riders will remain in their seats until the bus is completely stopped.
8. Riders should instantly obey any command or suggestions from the coach, sponsor, or drivers.
9. Profanity, vulgarity or indecent language will not be tolerated.
10. Malicious damage to the bus will result in immediate refusal to transport the guilty party, plus restitution.
11. Riders calling from the bus cell phone should sit in the seat behind the driver. Bus cell phone use is at the sponsor's discretion.
12. Outside of ordinary conversation, students will observe classroom conduct while on the bus.
13. Students will not throw waste paper or other debris on the floor.

14. Students will not get on, off, or move about within the bus while it is in motion.
15. Any damage to the bus will be reported to the driver at once.
16. Students must be absolutely quiet while the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
17. There will be no use of tobacco/alcohol/drugs on the bus at any time.
18. Students must return to Fort Benton on the bus unless written permission from the parent is provided to the sponsor or coach.
19. Students will be allowed to eat food or snacks or drink beverages on the bus. Any abuse will result in a temporary suspension of this privilege. Sunflower seeds, pistachios, and in-shell peanuts are not allowed to be eaten on any bus.
20. Students will not enter or exit from emergency doors except when an actual emergency exists or during practice drills.
21. Students are not to be in the aisle way when the bus is in motion.
22. Video games and personal music players may be played on buses as long as the speaker volume is turned off or headphones are used. No speakers are allowed.

After Leaving the Bus:

1. Do not run or push while unloading from the bus.
2. When it is necessary for a rider to cross the road when the bus is stopped, the crossing should be made only in front of the bus, after looking both ways to make sure no traffic is approaching from either direction, and upon signal from the driver.
3. Unless otherwise instructed, students should go directly from school to their home.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

The interest and assistance of each parent concerning safety and proper behavior while riding an activity bus is appreciated by the School. The following suggestions are ways in which you can assist the Extra-Curricular Transportation Program.

1. Ensure that your children are at the school fifteen (15) minutes early.
2. Dress your children in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.
3. Encourage bus safety at home. Caution your children regarding safe behavior and conduct while riding a bus.
4. Establish a safety-minded example for your children.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

◆ **STAY SEATED**

◆ **FACE FORWARD**

◆ **TALK IN A QUIET VOICE**