

FORT BENTON DISTRICT #1
Fort Benton, Montana
SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS' HANDBOOK

2024-2025



The Montana Pupil Transportation Handbook
will serve as a guide to school bus operation in the Fort Benton Public Schools.
Approved by Board of Trustees
Paul Benhart, Transportation Director

Adopted: 6/11/2024
New

Transportation Directory

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

Drivers	Cell	Home
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	
James Childs	231-0537	
Eric Easterly	621-0161	
Thad Kaiser	291-1770	
Jim O'Hara	799-2992	
Vicky O'Hara	899-4529	
Kim Singer	621-3676	
Wes Skerritt	621-3880	622-3879
Jeff Tackes	231-4833	622-5383
Bert Tredway	970-218-8839	
Brian Wood	621-5699	

Administration	Work	Home
Patrick Hould, Dist. Supt. & MS/HS Principal	622-5112	621-0979
Jamie Ball, Activities Director	622-5112	622-3700
Roxie Benjamin, Elem. Principal	622-3721	
Cali O'Hara, Business Mgr.	622-5691	

Trustees - Transportation Committee

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

Sheriff's Office 622-5451

Fort Benton District #1

Fort Benton, Montana

To: School Bus Drivers

You are a professional school bus driver, an important link in the process of educating children. You will be helping to transport over 125 pupils to and from school approximately 540 miles each day. Activity buses travel over 50,000 miles each year providing rides to events. Every effort is made to make the school bus ride as pleasant and safe as possible.

There are four school bus routes, six yellow school buses, and three activity buses - the finest equipment available to carry out this job.

To some of you drivers it will be just another day and you will take it in stride. To others it will be a new experience.

You are responsible to the school district as well as yourself. The responsibility for the safety and welfare of students who ride school buses is shared by students, parents, bus drivers, activity sponsors, and the school district. We must all work together in order to have an efficient transportation program.

It is with these factors in mind that the following regulations are adopted. Any suggestions for the improvement of these regulations will be appreciated.

May you have a successful driving year. If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or ideas concerning the program, students, buses or routes, please voice them.

Pat Hould, Superintendent

THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

School Bus Driver Qualifications (MCA 20-10-103; ARM 10.7.111)

Montana law dictates that a school bus driver shall:

1. AGE & EXPERIENCE - Is not less than 18 years of age;
(ARM adds: Have five years of licensed driving experience;)
2. CHARACTER - Is of good moral character;
3. CDL LICENSE - Is the holder of a valid commercial driver's license;
4. DOT LICENSE - Has filed with the district a satisfactory medical examination report, on a form approved by the United States department of transportation or by the superintendent of public instruction, signed by any physician licensed in the United States. If acceptable to an insurance carrier, any licensed physician;

(A Montana commercial driver's license [CDL] requires a valid DOT physical good for two years.
5. BASIC FIRST AID CARD - Has completed a basic first aid course and holds a valid basic first aid certificate from an authorized instructor;
6. OTHER - Has complied with any other qualification established by the board of public education;
7. CERTIFICATE - Has filed with the county superintendent a certificate from the trustees of the district for which the school bus is to be driven, certifying compliance with the driver qualifications enumerated in this section; and
8. EXPIRATIONS AND RENEWAL - A school bus driver certificate remains valid until the earliest expiration date of the commercial vehicle operator's endorsement, the first aid certificate, and/or physical examination.

A new certificate must be issued to the driver when any of the above items expires and is renewed.
(ARM)

9. The District will provide a school bus driver training program. All bus drivers shall complete 15 (fifteen) hours of in-service training annually.
10. Random Drug testing will be completed in accordance with Policy 5228P:

PERSONNEL - 5228P

Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus and Commercial Vehicle Drivers

School bus and commercial vehicle drivers shall be subject to a drug and alcohol testing program that fulfills the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 382.

Other persons who drive vehicles designed to transport sixteen (16) or more passengers, including the driver, are likewise subject to the drug and alcohol testing program.

Testing procedures and facilities used for the tests shall conform with the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, §§ 40, et seq.

Pre-Employment Tests

Tests shall be conducted before the first time a driver performs any safety-sensitive function for the District.

Safety-sensitive functions include all on-duty functions performed from the time a driver begins work or is required to be ready to work, until he/she is relieved from work and all responsibility for performing work. It includes driving; waiting to be dispatched; inspecting and servicing equipment; supervising, performing, or assisting in loading and unloading; repairing or obtaining and waiting for help with a disabled vehicle; performing driver requirements related to accidents; and performing any other work for the District or paid work for any entity.

The tests shall be required of an applicant only after he/she has been offered the position.

Exceptions may be made for drivers who have had the alcohol test required by law within the previous six (6) months and participated in the drug testing program required by law within the previous thirty (30) days, provided that the District has been able to make all verifications required by law.

Post-Accident Tests

Alcohol and controlled substance tests shall be conducted as soon after an accident as practicable on any driver:

1. Who was performing safety-sensitive functions with respect to the vehicle, if the accident involved loss of human life; or
2. Who receives a citation within 8 hours of the occurrence under state or local law, for a moving traffic violation arising from the accident if the accident involved:
 - (i) Bodily injury to any person who, as a result of the injury, immediately receives medical treatment away from the scene of the accident; or
 - (ii) One or more motor vehicles incurring disabling damage as a result of the accident, requiring the motor vehicle to be transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other motor vehicle.

Disabling damage under the law means damage which precludes departure of a motor

vehicle from the scene of the accident in its usual manner in daylight after simple repairs.

Accidents will be reported to the Superintendent or designee immediately. Drivers shall make themselves readily available for testing, absent the need for immediate medical attention.

No such driver shall use alcohol for eight (8) hours after the accident, or until after he/she undergoes a post-accident alcohol test, whichever occurs first.

If an alcohol test is not administered within two (2) hours or if a drug test is not administered within thirty-two (32) hours, the District shall prepare and maintain records explaining why the test was not conducted. Tests will not be given if not administered within eight (8) hours after the accident for alcohol or within thirty-two (32) hours for drugs.

Tests conducted by authorized federal, state, or local officials will fulfill post-accident testing requirements, provided they conform to applicable legal requirements and are obtained by the District. Breath tests will validate only the alcohol test and cannot be used to fulfill controlled substance testing obligations.

Random Tests

Tests shall be conducted on a random basis at unannounced times throughout the year. Tests for alcohol shall be conducted just before, during, or just after the performance of safety-sensitive functions. The number of random alcohol tests annually must equal twenty-five percent (25%) of the average number of driver positions. The number of random drug tests annually must equal fifty percent (50%) of the average number of driver positions. Drivers shall be selected by a scientifically valid random process, and each driver shall have an equal chance of being tested each time selections are made.

Reasonable Suspicion Tests

Tests shall be conducted when a supervisor or District official trained in accordance with law has reasonable suspicion that the driver has violated the District's alcohol or drug prohibitions. This reasonable suspicion must be based on specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the driver's appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors. The observations may include indications of the chronic and withdrawal effects of controlled substances.

Alcohol tests are authorized for reasonable suspicion only if the required observations are made during, just before, or just after the period of the work day when the driver must comply with alcohol prohibitions. An alcohol test may not be conducted by the person who determines that reasonable suspicion exists to conduct such a test. If an alcohol test is not administered within two (2) hours of a determination of reasonable suspicion, the District shall prepare and maintain a record explaining why this was not done. Attempts to conduct alcohol tests shall terminate after eight (8) hours.

A supervisor or District official who makes observations leading to a controlled substance reasonable suspicion test shall make a written record of his/her observations within twenty-four

(24) hours of the observed behavior or before the results of the drug test are released, whichever is earlier.

Enforcement

Any driver who refuses to submit to a post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, or follow-up test shall not perform or continue to perform safety-sensitive functions.

Drivers who test positive for alcohol or drugs shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

A driver who violates District prohibitions related to drugs and alcohol shall receive from the District the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of substance abuse professionals and counseling and treatment programs available to evaluate and resolve drug and alcohol-related problems. The employee shall be evaluated by a substance abuse professional who shall determine what help, if any, the driver needs in resolving such a problem. Any substance abuse professional who determines that a driver needs assistance shall not refer the driver to a private practice, person, or organization in which he/she has a financial interest, except under circumstances allowed by law.

An employee identified as needing help in resolving a drug or alcohol problem shall be evaluated by a substance abuse professional to determine that he/she has properly followed the prescribed rehabilitation program and shall be subject to unannounced follow-up tests after returning to duty.

Return-to-Duty Tests

A drug or alcohol test shall be conducted when a driver who has violated the District's drug or alcohol prohibition returns to performing safety-sensitive duties.

Employees whose conduct involved drugs cannot return to duty in a safety-sensitive function until the return-to-duty drug test produces a verified negative result.

Employees whose conduct involved alcohol cannot return to duty in a safety-sensitive function until the return-to-duty alcohol test produces a verified result that meets federal and District standards.

Follow-Up Tests

A driver who violates the District's drug or alcohol prohibition and is subsequently identified by a substance abuse professional as needing assistance in resolving a drug or alcohol problem shall be subject to unannounced follow-up testing as directed by the substance abuse professional in accordance with law. Follow-up alcohol testing shall be conducted just before, during, or just after the time when the driver is performing safety-sensitive functions.

Records

Employee drug and alcohol test results and records shall be maintained under strict confidentiality and released only in accordance with law. Upon written request, a driver shall receive copies of any records pertaining to his/her use of drugs or alcohol, including any records pertaining to his/her drug or alcohol tests. Records shall be made available to a subsequent employer or other identified persons only as expressly requested in writing by the driver.

Notifications

Each driver shall receive educational materials that explain the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 382, together with a copy of the District's policy and regulations for meeting these requirements. Representatives of employee organizations shall be notified of the availability of this information. The information shall identify:

1. The person designated by the District to answer driver questions about the materials;
2. The categories of drivers who are subject to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 382;
3. Sufficient information about the safety-sensitive functions performed by drivers to make clear what period of the work day the driver is required to comply with Part 382;
4. Specific information concerning driver conduct that is prohibited by Part 382;
5. The circumstances under which a driver will be tested for drugs and/or alcohol under Part 382;
6. The procedures that will be used to test for the presence of drugs and alcohol, protect the driver and the integrity of the testing processes, safeguard the validity of test results, and ensure that test results are attributed to the correct driver;
7. The requirement that a driver submit to drug and alcohol tests administered in accordance with Part 382;
8. An explanation of what constitutes a refusal to submit to a drug or alcohol test and the attendant consequences;
9. The consequences for drivers found to have violated the drug and alcohol prohibitions of Part 382, including the requirement that the driver be removed immediately from safety-sensitive functions and the procedures for referral, evaluation, and treatment;
10. The consequences for drivers found to have an alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater but less than 0.04; and
11. Information concerning the effects of drugs and alcohol on an individual's health, work, and personal life; signs and symptoms of a drug or alcohol problem (the driver's or a coworker's); and available methods of intervening when a drug or alcohol problem is

suspected, including confrontation, referral to an employee assistance program, and/or referral to management.

12. The requirement that the following personal information collected and maintained under this part shall be reported to the Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse:
 - A. A verified positive, adulterated, or substituted drug test result;
 - B. An alcohol confirmation test with a concentration of 0.04 or higher;
 - C. A refusal to submit to any test required by law;
 - D. An employer's report of actual knowledge, as defined in law:
 - E. On duty alcohol use;
 - F. Pre-duty alcohol use;
 - G. Alcohol use following an accident;
 - H. Controlled substance use;
 - I. A substance abuse professional report of the successful completion of the return-to-duty process;
 - J. A negative return-to-duty test; and
 - K. An employer's report of completion of follow-up testing.

Drivers shall also receive information about legal requirements, District policies, and disciplinary consequences related to the use of alcohol and drugs.

Each driver shall sign a statement certifying that he/she has received a copy of the above materials.

Before any driver operates a commercial motor vehicle, the District shall provide him/her with post-accident procedures that will make it possible to comply with post-accident testing requirements.

Before drug and alcohol tests are performed, the District shall inform drivers that the tests are given pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 382. This notice shall be provided only after the compliance date specified in law.

The District shall notify a driver of the results of a pre-employment drug test if the driver requests such results within sixty (60) calendar days of being notified of the disposition of his/

her employment application.

The District shall notify a driver of the results of random, reasonable suspicion, and post-accident drug tests if the test results are verified positive. The District shall also tell the driver which controlled substance(s) were verified as positive.

Drivers shall inform their supervisors if at any time they are using a controlled substance which their physician has prescribed for therapeutic purposes. Such a substance may be used only if the physician has advised the driver that it will not adversely affect his/her ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.

Clearinghouse

The School District will comply with the requirements of the Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. The School District and Transportation service providers are called upon to report DOT drug and alcohol testing program violations to the Clearinghouse. Drivers have been notified that any information subject to disclosure will be submitted to the Clearinghouse in accordance with this policy and applicable regulations.

Legal Reference: 49 C.F.R. Part 40 Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing
49. C.F.R. Part 382 Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing

REQUEST FOR RECORDS POLICY 5228F2

I, _____, an employee serving as a commercially licensed driver for Fort Benton School District complete this form to request any records pertaining to my use of drugs or alcohol, including any records pertaining to my drug or alcohol tests in accordance with School District Policies 5228 and 5228P. If I choose to have these records forwarded to a third party, I am noting the contact information in the space provided on this form.

Employee Signature:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Receipt:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I authorize the School District to send the requested records to the following individual or entity in accordance with the authorization outlined on this form.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT
POLICY 5228F

I, _____, an employee serving as a commercially licensed driver for Fort Benton School District complete this form to document that I have received School District Policies 5228 and 5228P and been given the opportunity to ask questions about the policies to fully understand how the policies govern my employment with the School District.

Employee Signature:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

A. Operation of the School Bus

1. The safety of the pupils riding the bus should be the first consideration of the bus driver at all times.
2. Students must be on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy. The schedule is set up to spend a maximum of five minutes at each stop.
3. No one should be permitted to stand in the bus other than to load or unload.
4. The loading and unloading of pupils should follow recommended practices. When pupils must cross the road the bus driver must use the stop signal lights and stop arm to halt all traffic from both directions. The bus driver should not open the door of the bus to unload riders until (s)he is sure that all traffic has stopped.
5. All reports that are required by the school administration must be made accurately and promptly.
6. The school bus driver must be acquainted with all the state traffic laws and driving regulations.
7. A school bus driver should never leave the bus while it has pupils aboard. In case of an accident or a breakdown(s) he/she should stay with the riders.
8. A school bus should not back up unless absolutely necessary, and never at school during a school day.
9. The school bus driver should check his/her bus and equipment each day.
10. The school bus driver must keep the bus clean at all times.
11. A route bus driver must manage the pupils so that conduct aboard the school bus is orderly and acceptable. Discipline cases should be reported to the Building Principal for advice and cooperative action.
12. All school bus accidents must be reported to the highway patrol as required by law and to school officials as required by state regulations.
13. **SCHOOL BUSES MUST COME TO A COMPLETE STOP AT ALL RAILROAD CROSSINGS. THE DRIVER MUST OPEN THE DOOR AND LOOK EACH WAY BEFORE CROSSING.**
14. The driver shall keep him/her self in the proper physical and mental condition to operate the bus with safety.
15. The driver shall stop to load or unload pupils only at designated stops.

16. The pupils shall use the emergency exit door only in cases of emergency.
17. The driver shall see that all doors on the bus are kept closed while the bus is in motion.
18. The driver shall bring the bus to a complete stop before taking on or letting off pupils.
19. The driver shall report to school officials immediately when the bus is overloaded.
20. The driver shall adhere closely to the established schedule.
21. The driver shall not permit anyone else to operate the bus.
22. The driver shall see that the bus is in condition to pass inspection at any time.
23. The driver shall not permit firearms or explosives to be carried in the bus.
24. The driver shall not permit dogs or other animals on the bus.
25. The driver shall keep his/her person neat and clean and his/her deportment comparable to that expected of a teacher. He/she shall not use tobacco on the school bus and shall not permit children to do so.
26. The driver shall abstain absolutely from the use of intoxicating liquors on days when he or she transports pupils and at least for a period of 8 hours prior to reporting to work.
27. The driver shall not transport any person who is not a pupil or an official of the school without permission from the Building Principal or as provided in a parental note.
28. If any difficulty arises or if disorder prevails in the bus, the driver shall stop the bus and shall not proceed until the situation is remedied. Misconduct of pupils shall be reported to the Building Principal.
29. Activity Buses may transport students from other schools when at an event.
30. School bus routes have been established to serve the greatest number of riders. Drivers are not permitted to make changes in routes without permission of the Transportation Director.

Recommendations for improvement of routes are encouraged. Drivers are expected to assist in determining safe and efficient bus stops. At all times the driver must keep in the bus a copy of a current route map showing stops and time schedules.

31. The school bus driver establishes an image for the transportation system. The driver's attitude toward the students, school personnel, parents and all other people

determine the good or poor relationship between the school and the public. Remember, you are a part of the Fort Benton School System - represent it wholeheartedly.

32. Practice proper driving habits. Drive safely, defensively. Be courteous - yield the right of way. Don't allow traffic to build up behind you.
33. In the event of a breakdown, immediately contact your transportation supervisor or transportation director. In the event of a delay, contact a parent on your route so that others can be notified.
34. 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. Remember, there is a fifteen mile per hour speed limit within school areas.
35. According to State School Laws no one may drive a school bus unless certified. Please do not arrange for your own substitute.
36. Report all mechanical deficiencies to the Transportation Supervisor.
37. The Superintendent will recommend that a driver's services be terminated if a speeding ticket is received while driving a school bus.
38. Use care when drinking beverages while driving. Distractions cause accidents.
39. It is the driver's job to keep the route bus clean on the inside. Maintain a clean bus throughout the school year.
40. Please alternate fuel fill-ups at Mountain View Co-op and Joyce Fuel & Feed.
41. Route Drivers are hired to drive "a" bus. Whether the district uses the assigned route bus for an activity trip should not be a concern of the route driver.
42. Please do not leave your buses unattended with students on board, while parked at the elementary or MS/HS Building. Due to liability reasons, please DO NOT leave your buses unattended while picking up or dropping off students at either school (AM and PM route). Pull keys if you must leave the bus.
43. When you fill up at Mountain View Co-Op and Joyce Fuel & Feed, you MUST use Colored #2 fuel. This is a non-taxed fuel that schools may use.
44. We have purchased key rings that can be separated - ignition key on one end and locks/fuel keys on the other end. DO NOT fuel up your bus while leaving the engine running. The chance of fuel ignition, even with diesel, is not worth the liability associated with such an act.

45. Tobacco use is not allowed in the bus barns or in school buses at any time.
46. Route drivers are to sweep out their buses at least once/week. Please, do this while warming up the buses in the A.M.
47. Bus drivers are to wear their seat belt at all times while driving.
48. To warm the buses use high idle. Never leave the engine low idling for more than 10 minutes. Leave the bus barn overhead doors closed when the bus is outside. Use remote garage door openers only when the bus is outside the bus barn.
49. Make only necessary cell phone calls while on a bus driving trip. Do not place calls while driving. It is always best to pull over and stop while talking on a cell phone. Time lost is worth the added safety.
50. If a driver doesn't feel up to it, they have the right and responsibility to not drive, even if already on the road, but consult with the Transportation Director and the Athletic Director.

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.

Assignment of Drivers and Supervisor Responsibility

School staff members may drive District buses for an activity or regular route. Whenever they are not receiving compensation for other duties assigned and whenever the list of non-staff activity drivers has been exhausted. The District reserves the right to assign bus drivers! The School Board and administration does not want to encourage double-dipping of any district funds. With regard to staff members driving district buses, this policy in no way opposes staff members from being adequately compensated for generous and competent services beyond their regular duties.

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

Extracurricular Bus Driver Salary for 2024-2025

1. Unless otherwise specifically approved in writing by the Transportation Director, bus drivers shall not be paid per diem for meals or be reimbursed for meals on extracurricular trips, except where all those on the trip receive school paid meals. Bus Drivers should put their meals on the same P.O. as the students.
2. The rate is \$17.52/hour. These rates are subject to change by the Board.
3. A maximum of one and a half (1½) hours is allowed for sweeping, mopping, and refueling the bus upon return to Fort Benton. Drivers who do not clean buses will not get driving assignments.

TOBACCO FREE POLICY

The District maintains tobacco-free buildings and grounds. Tobacco includes, but is not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, and smokeless tobacco.

Use of tobacco products in a public school building or on public school property is prohibited, unless the use of a tobacco product in a classroom or on other school property as part of a lecture, demonstration, or educational forum sanctioned by a school administrator or faculty member concerning the risks associated with using tobacco products.

For the purpose of this policy, “public school building or public school property” means:

- public land, fixtures, buildings, or other property owned or occupied by an institution for the teaching of minor children that is established and maintained under the laws of the state of Montana at public expense; and
- Includes playgrounds, school steps, parking lots, administration buildings, athletic facilities, gymnasiums, locker rooms, and school buses.

B. Supervision of Pupils

1. The route driver is responsible for enforcing all regulations governing conduct of pupils from the time the pupils enter the bus in the morning until they alight from it at the schoolhouse, and from the time they enter the bus at the schoolhouse until they alight at their regular stops. The driver's relationship with pupils should be on the same plane as that expected of a teacher. Students may not get off at other stops and ride with someone else in cars, etc. without proper permission.
2. Drivers are cautioned against putting pupils off along the route for breach of discipline. Such pupils should be unloaded at the home stop and notified that they will not be conveyed until the matter has been cleared with the proper school officials.

3. At least twice annually, drivers will instruct students in regard to safe riding procedure, use of emergency equipment, and conduct two evacuations per school year. The place for conducting emergency evacuations will be designated by the Director of Transportation.
4. The driver shall give full instructions to all pupils on the bus concerning the proper procedure in crossing the road after alighting from the bus.
5. When stopping the bus on the highway, the driver, after ascertaining that the way is clear, and with stop arm and signals in operation, shall signal pupils across the road in front of the bus. Students should be able to see your face at all times.
6. The driver is expected to report all cases of disobedience of the pupils to the proper authorities. The driver should keep written records of student disobedience. Discipline forms are in the bus log book.
7. 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.
8. Permission slips are not required for any students riding to school.

C. Accident Procedure

1. In case a rider is injured in boarding the bus, while on the bus, or when leaving the bus, a complete report must be made to the Building Principal.
2. The driver shall be thoroughly familiar with the contents of the first-aid kit that is required in all school buses.
3. The driver should not, except in extreme emergency, leave the bus to summon help in case of an accident or a breakdown. If at all possible, use the two-way radio or phone.
4. In case of an accident, the driver is to notify the Fort Benton Police Department or Sheriff's Office first, then the proper school officials. Following the accident the bus is NOT to be moved for any reason until okayed by the investigating officers.
5. The driver shall always put out warning flares or flags, in case of an emergency which may require the bus to stop on the highway for any length of time.

"USE YOUR SEAT BELTS - THIS IS REQUIRED BY LAW"

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/passengers 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 the 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.

PUPIL RESPONSIBILITIES / REGULATIONS

1. There will be no pushing or scuffling while the bus is loading.
2. Pupils will go immediately to a seat and sit down upon entering the bus.
3. Pupils will keep arms, hands, head and all parts of the body inside the bus when in motion.
4. Pupils will not throw objects out of the bus while it is standing or moving.

5. Pupils 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 storage units first, if available.
6. Talk should be in conversational tones. There should be no shouting or loud talking which may distract the bus driver. Riders should not carry on unnecessary conversation with the driver.
7. Scuffling, playing or fighting on the bus will not be allowed. This may endanger all the pupils.
8. Pupils will remain in their seats at bus stops until the bus is completely stopped. Pupils should be at the bus stop at the time the bus is scheduled to arrive.
9. When it is necessary for a pupil to cross the road at a bus stop, 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.
10. Pupils should instantly obey any command or suggestions from the drivers.
11. Profanity, vulgarity or indecent language will not be tolerated.
12. Repeated acts of misconduct may result in the revocation of riding privileges.
13. Malicious damage to the bus will result in immediate refusal to transport the guilty party, plus restitution.

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE

Rider conduct is one of the major problems confronting school bus drivers. Poor discipline aboard the bus can lead to a serious accident. In fact, other than teaching children how to get along with others, the only reason for demanding good conduct aboard the bus is for safety purposes.

School bus discipline is a joint problem of the route driver and school administration. The driver is the first line of resistance to poor conduct, but s(he) has full and active support of the school administration. School officials can be expected to act swiftly and emphatically when called upon by a driver for assistance in handling a disciplinary case.

A regular form is given to the drivers on which to report riders not heeding the driver's requests and demands. The rider is then confronted with this accusation by school officials.

It has been found that close cooperation between driver, school officials and parents results in good citizenship.

Drivers need to show proof of communication to parents either via phone (have parents phone building principal) or use bus conduct form. Turn one copy in to building principal.

LOADING AND UNLOADING

This is the point at which most accidents occur. The student's safety is your responsibility.

The route driver is expected to be in the bus while loading.

While loading, do not allow students to crowd the door. Insist they form an orderly line. Insist that students go immediately to their seats and remain seated.

Buses are designed for three elementary passengers to a seat. This may not be possible with older students. Work out a satisfactory arrangement for the best utilization of all seats. See to it that those at the end of the line do not have to struggle for a seat. No one should be permitted to stand, except for loading and unloading. Don't use the brakes if a student is standing, in order to get his/her attention.

When students must cross the road to be picked up, they are to wait for the driver's signal to cross the road. Be sure traffic is clear. In unloading, students must cross in front of the bus, and likewise, wait for the driver's signal to cross the road.

They should be able to see your face at all times and watch for your signals.

Avoid unnecessary bus stops. Where possible, have students meet at a central spot, provided it is not a traffic hazard.

Never leave a student alone at a bus stop. Bring him or her back to town if necessary.

Bus zones have been provided at all schools. Unless other arrangements have been made, load at the Elementary and Senior High School in those zones. You are expected to be at the schools when school dismisses. If possible, park bumper to bumper and in the same order each day.

Before leaving the schools, BE SURE YOU HAVE ALL YOUR PASSENGERS. The first week will be especially difficult as the younger students are easily confused.

School personnel will be on hand at the Elementary bus zone to assist in clearing traffic for you. Please do not pull out of line.

SIGNAL LIGHTS

Your bus is equipped with two amber and two red lights on the front and rear of the bus.

Turn on the warning light switch before making the first stop or pickup. Turn it off when making the last stop or pickup.

Start flashing amber lights at least 500 feet before stopping to pick up and discharging students.

Warning lights are not to be used in school bus zones at school, only on the road or highway.

Use the roof-mounted strobe light when visibility is poor. Strobe lights are a distraction to other drivers in good weather.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY TRIPS AND FIELD TRIPS

1. Drivers are expected to be **at the loading area at least 15 minutes before departure time. Buses need to be warmed up at least 10 minutes at the bus barn in cold weather.**
2. Assist in loading luggage, uniforms and band instruments. Do not block the emergency door. **DO NOT allow passengers to open/close the under storage doors of the activity bus since this is a driver's responsibility.** Please understand that the activity driver is responsible for the care of the bus as well as driving the vehicle.
3. Depart according to your schedule and instructions from the coach or sponsor.
4. You are in full charge of the bus and the passengers safety. The driver makes all decisions concerning road conditions and safe travel, whether to continue or return due to weather/safety conditions. 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.**
5. Behavior of the pupils is the coaches'/sponsors' responsibility. If the students are too loud, or otherwise distract the driver, notify the coach/sponsor to re-establish order. If a coach/sponsor is consistently negligent in this, notify the administration. Hitting the brakes to discipline students will not be tolerated.
6. In cold weather have your bus warm before loading students after activities.
7. Park only in authorized areas at other schools.

8. Keep the bus locked to protect your property, as well as that of the students.
9. It is the coaches/sponsor's responsibility to not allow students to shout at a passerby or get involved with students at other schools by harassing them from the bus.
10. Never, under any condition, go under the Fort Benton railway underpass, loaded or empty.
11. Check your bus after activities for flat tires, glass breakage, etc.
12. Try to have your bus clean before departing on a trip.
13. Make sure the bus is clean inside when you are done with it. This is the driver's responsibility and no one else's. You can ask the coaches/advisors to have the students help pick up trash. Drivers that continue to do a poor job of cleaning will receive less/no driving time.
14. Keep an adequate supply of fuel in case of trouble on the road. Credit cards are available from the transportation supervisor if you think you may need one. Do not overfill the fuel tank. Once the pump nozzle clicks off, the tank is at specified capacity.
15. If you have any questions in regard to route, destination, or location of the school, check with your sponsor or transportation supervisor.
16. The activity driver is to remain at the destination point unless the coach/advisor has other plans.
17. Buses are not to be parked at your home at any time. Buses are to be parked at the bus barn. See the Transportation Supervisor for exceptions to this rule.
18. Continual complaints concerning drivers will decrease or prohibit your scheduled activity driving time.
19. Mechanical problems with your activity bus needs to be reported **DIRECTLY** to the Transportation Supervisor. This report must be in writing or stated in person.
20. Do not coach the passengers you are driving for. We have coaches who are paid to do this and it only causes confusion with the athletes.
21. Coaches/Advisors may want to attend another function after their particular activity is over for the day. Drivers are expected to honor the request.
22. 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 SCHOOL BUSES.**

23. Windows may be opened upon the discretion of the driver AND/OR the coach/sponsor.
24. School bus drivers may not exceed the posted Speed limits. Drivers are not to exceed 70 MPH. The Driver, road conditions and weather will determine a safe speed. Remember, there is a fifteen mile per hour speed limit within school areas.
25. The bus drivers are not allowed to discourage students from the use of the bus at an activity.

Students can and will be in and out of the bus for various reasons. Contact the coach/advisor if this is a serious problem.

26. Students will be 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 shelled foods are not allowed to be eaten on ANY bus trip. No fountain drinks, only drinks with lids, which are re-sealable. No exceptions.
The Coaches/Advisors will be held accountable if this occurs.
27. **Spiked shoes** are not to be worn onto any school owned bus.
28. Activity salaries/meal reimbursement will not be honored after June 10th of each year. No compensation will be received after that date.

*****Please turn in your white bus slips, etc. as soon as possible and no later than two weeks after each trip.**

29. Please alternate fuel fill-ups at Mountain View Co-op (Cenex) and Joyce Fuel & Feed.
30. Do not leave your bus unattended with students on board. There are exceptions but they are on a limited basis.
31. Bus drivers children/spouse and coaches children/spouse are not to ride the bus unless written permission is granted from the Transportation Director.
32. Upon your return home from a trip:
 - a. Disposal of trash - all trash must be disposed of at the **bus barn dumpsters** at the street.
 - b. Sweep the floor. Use the brooms at the bus barn.
 - c. Mop the floor. Use the mops at the bus barn.
 - d. Fuel up the bus so it is ready to go the following day.
33. Please do a radio check each time you leave on a trip. This only applies if the bus is leaving during regular office hours.

34. When you fill up at Mountain View Co-Op & Joyce Fuel & Feed, You **MUST** use colored fuel. This is a non-taxed fuel that schools can use. **Again, please alternate your fill ups at both places.**
35. Please be careful when refueling the activity bus. Do not overfill fuel tanks. Once the pump nozzle clicks off, the tank is full to specified capacity. Spilled diesel over the sides of the bus causes problems with the seals on the side door.
36. Tobacco use is not allowed in the bus barns or in school buses at any time.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE

1. **Bus Rules** - Have parents sign a list of passenger rules at the beginning of the year indicating that they and their students have read and understand them. This will ensure that the parents and students have been made aware of the rules in case problems develop. Keep the signed sheets on file.
2. **Know the Parents** - Drivers should visit each parent on the route, as discipline problems many times are reduced if a parent visitation has been made.
Meet the parents before problems occur, not after.
3. **Seat Assignments** - Assigned seats reduce disagreements among students about seating arrangements and help the driver know who is responsible for mischief. It is suggested that assigned seats be changed every 9 weeks or so.
4. **Punishment Seats** - If front seats are used for punishment, set a time limit on the punishment so that if the students' behavior improves they can be rewarded by allowing them to sit elsewhere on the bus. Students must feel that proper behavior is worth the effort, and rewards can help.
5. **Set the Tone** - Tolerate noise on the bus only to the extent that it does not impair the safety of the students. Decide and be consistent. Students do not resent discipline, but do resent inconsistency.
6. **Reward or Award** - Try to reward good behavior in some way whenever possible. A student often misbehaves to gain attention of the driver or other students.
7. **Music** - Drivers generally agree that radios and tape decks are valuable for discipline. Music also can be used as a reward for good behavior. Students must use headsets on the bus, when listening to music. The driver controls the volume on the bus radio/tape player for safety reasons.
8. **Discipline Report Slips** - These slips tell how, when, and where the student misbehaved, and is signed and sent to school authorities and parents. The slip should describe the consequences of continued misbehavior.

9. Stopping the Bus - If a discipline problem is serious, stop the bus and deal with the problem. Do not attempt to operate the bus and solve a major discipline problem at the same time - it may impair safe vehicle operation.
10. Make a Judgment - How important is the misbehavior? Take a second or two to make that judgment before you react to a discipline problem.
11. Firm, but Fair - Give the students time to react to your instructions. Be concerned with their needs and try to be honest and friendly, and firm but fair.
12. If you want a Building Principal to speak to your riders, just ask.
13. Be friendly to your passengers. Earn their respect. Don't expect it.
14. Video games may be played on buses as long as the volume is turned off and not distracting.

DRIVER INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANCELED ROUTES

The following is the procedure, in order, for route cancellation!

1. Make **every effort** to run the route. **Safety is the #1 Priority.**
2. Receive authorization from the Transportation Director in any cancellation.
3. Call **ALL** parents on your route from your personal phone. Don't relay messages to other parents but actually speak to one person in each household. You will still be paid for a day of driving even if the buses do not go out.
4. Continue calling until **ALL** parents have been notified. Please call the parents in the order that you pick their children up on the route.
5. Be prepared to run the PM route even if the AM route was canceled: Please meet in the Transportation Director's office prior to the PM run to determine if the route will run.
6. Do not use the shop phone on cancellation days. Use your own phone. Parents may be trying to get through to report road conditions, etc.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

DRIVING ERRORS

ATTENTION SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS: Learn to recognize driving errors that lead to accidents before they happen.

1. Before Start Up:
 - a. Failure to properly evaluate personal, mental, and physical condition.
 - b. Failure to signal when pulling away from the curb.
 - c. Failure to wait for a break in traffic before moving.

2. Speed Control:
 - a. Too fast for the volume of traffic.
 - b. Too fast for the condition of the road surface.
 - c. Too fast for visibility conditions (due to weather or road).
 - d. Too fast for light conditions (dusk darkness).
 - e. Too fast for neighborhood or roadside environments.
 - f. Too fast for street highway layout and traffic signals.
 - g. Too slow for the speed of the traffic stream.

3. Improper Lane Usage:
 - a. Failure to select the proper lane.
 - b. Failure to drive in the center of lane.
 - c. Abrupt lane change.
 - d. Failure to signal intent to change lanes.
 - e. Weaving in and out of traffic lanes.

4. Passing Errors:
 - a. Misjudging speed and nearness of oncoming vehicles.
 - b. Failure to check side and rear before pulling out to pass.
 - c. Overtaking and passing too slowly.
 - d. Failure to signal intention of passing to driver being passed.
 - e. Cutting in too quickly after passing.
 - f. Unnecessary passing.

A bus driver can be the most important individual in the student's day. A friendly greeting can erase the tensions of rushing to get ready for school and set a positive tone for the coming school day. You can make up for a missed breakfast or sharp words spoken in haste at home.

By the same token, a few kind words at the end of the day can make up for a fight with other students, a poor grade, or a problem with a teacher.

The child can go home feeling better about the day, the school, and his or her success.

Choose your words carefully. Your students are very precious. Guard their safety well and remember that you are often the most effective and visible ambassador of goodwill that the school district employs. You will be remembered for the rest of your students' lives.

