



On behalf of Bench Elementary “welcome to the hive!” We are the Bench Bees with the vision of “Creating lifelong learners who strive to succeed in our changing world.”

As part of the Billings Public Schools, Bench holds high expectations for success and achievement of the whole child --- academically and socially for all of our students. Children can also expect to receive full consideration for building their self-concepts. Verbal praise, smiles, words of encouragement, acceptance, and recognition are used generously and genuinely.

This handbook is published so that all students and parents may have a ready reference to information, which is necessary to the understanding of the daily operation of Bench Elementary. It is important that all students and their parents or guardians review the information in the handbook, so there may be as few misunderstandings as possible.

Students, you will find our academic standards necessarily high, and you will be expected to strive to become a lifelong learner as well as a respectful and responsible citizen. Make the most of your opportunities; you are laying the foundation of your future.

Parent participation and support during the school year is also an important component in the education of children. We encourage parent membership in the PTA. By working together we will be able to have your child reach his/her full potential. We look forward to a positive partnership with parents in fostering excellence in education.

In a few written pages it is difficult to cover all areas adequately, so we have kept our comments to the more common rules and regulations, and briefly touched on programs and opportunities for student participation. Please feel free to come in and discuss any questions, suggestions, or concerns you may have about school policies or opportunities. The faculty of Bench is always willing to help you.

Sincerely,

Cindy Brown, Principal
updated August 2022



District Policies and Procedures

In addition to Bench’s School handbook of procedures specific to our school, the following Student/ Parent Handbook establishes the obligations of all students in the Billings Public Schools. It is your obligation as a student in our district to know the contents of both and to understand that both the district’s Student/Parent Handbook and the school’s student handbook are enforceable as the “law” of the school district. School Board policy dictates that all BPS students must be informed of certain policies annually. Violations of district policy will be dealt with through disciplinary actions assigned by our building administrator(s) as agents of the Board of Trustees. The assurances afforded by district policy are provided to you by district administration and staff. Since printing these policies and procedures are quite costly and since the policies and procedures are available online, we are not printing a hard copy. However, if you would need a hard copy of any policy and/or procedure, the school office will be able to assist you.

To access the District website go to www.billingschools.org. Once you reach the home page, click on *School Board* then *Policies and Procedures*. You will be able to access a specific policy and/or procedure.

CALENDAR DATES OF IMPORTANCE

First Day of School	Aug. 22, 2022
Title I Meeting/Open House	Aug. 22, 2022
Fall Pictures	October 30, 2022
Last Day of School	June 2nd, 2023
PIR Days NO SCHOOL	Oct. 20-21, Jan. 16, April 7 & 10
Vacation Days	Sept.5, Nov 23-25, Dec 23-Jan 2, Feb.20, Mar. 13-17, Apr. 7 & 10, May 6 & 29
Parent/Teacher Conferences	Nov 2-4 (ALL GRADES) Dismissal at 12:00 pm

LUNCH/RECESS DISMISSAL TIMES

<i>GRADE</i>	<i>LUNCH</i>	<i>LUNCH RECESS</i>	<i>DAILY DISMISSAL (WEDNESDAYS 1 HOUR EARLIER)</i>
<i>K</i>	<i>11:00-11:20</i>	<i>11:20-11:40</i>	<i>2:15</i>
<i>1ST</i>	<i>11:20-11:40</i>	<i>11:00-11:20</i>	<i>2:15</i>
<i>2ND</i>	<i>11:40-12:00</i>	<i>12:00-12:20</i>	<i>2:15</i>
<i>3RD</i>	<i>12:20-12:40</i>	<i>12:40-1:00</i>	<i>2:15</i>
<i>4TH</i>	<i>12:00-12:20</i>	<i>11:40-12:00</i>	<i>3:00</i>
<i>5TH</i>	<i>12:40-1:00</i>	<i>12:20-12:40</i>	<i>3:00</i>

NOTE: This schedule may need to be adjusted to accommodate the needs of students and staff during the school year.

SCHOOL HOURS

Students are let into the building starting at 7:50. Please note there is no supervision prior to this time so please make your best effort to drop students off after 7:50. School starts at 8:20.

Primary grades are dismissed from school at 2:15 pm (1:15 on Wednesdays), and intermediate grades are dismissed at 3:00 pm. (2:00 on Wednesdays). After school is dismissed, we request that students leave school immediately unless asked to stay by a teacher or attend a supervised extracurricular activity. If a student is asked by a teacher to stay longer than 10 minutes after school, the student will call his/her parents for permission to stay. We ask that children not wait on the playground for siblings or friends who are dismissed later, as we have no after-school supervision. Students should not return to the playground areas until the students have gone home, and it is after 4:00 pm. If an emergency arises, arrangements can be made through the principal.

Our office hours are 7:30-4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

TARDINESS POLICY (Grades K - 5th)

Being on time for school is very important. If a student is late 10 minutes each day, he/she misses 1800 minutes of instructional time. That is 30 hours of lost learning or approximately one whole week of learning time. Studies confirm that missing 30 hours of instructional time impacts a student's academic performance. We expect our students to be at school when the bell rings at 8:15 am. Students who arrive late disrupt the class and cause a loss of instruction time. If the tardy problem is habitual, the Montana Code 20-5-106 on Truancy and our district procedures will be followed. Also students, who are habitually late, may be placed on an individual plan.

ATTENDANCE "3 IS THE KEY"

Bench Elementary is participating in the "3 is the Key" campaign sponsored by the United Way. It is critical for students to be in attendance. The goal we have set for our students is three or fewer tardies or absences for each trimester. Research shows that 10 or more absences in a school year significantly impact a child's overall academic performance. **All students are expected to attend school regularly and be punctual for classes.** If a child is to be tardy or absent, parents or guardians are required to notify the school (281-6203) by 8:30 am. If we do not hear from the parents/guardians, a call will be made to the child's home to verify the reason for the absence.

Students reporting to class after the final bell must check in with the office before they are admitted to class. If there are excessive absences and/or tardies, the Montana Code 20-5-106 on Truancy and our district procedures will be followed.

Students may not leave the school building or grounds under any circumstances during the school hours until they have checked out through the office. If you must leave the building because of illness or any other emergency, you must check out at the office. Furthermore, if your child is leaving the building for any reason (doctor's appointment, lunch with parent etc.), please send a note to school to your child's teacher and come to the school's office to pick up your child.

If your child is absent and homework is requested, please contact the office. Due to the importance of classroom instruction time and teacher duties, homework will be available for pickup after school.

THURSDAY FOLDERS

At this time every student in grades K-5 will be given a folder at the beginning of the school year. The purpose of the folder is for the students to take home all of the mailings, newsletters, and announcements that we hand out. The folders will be sent home on Thursdays. Please empty the folder, and return to school on Friday.

SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Safety is important. Children should be encouraged to practice good safety habits. Safety instruction is given at school, and safety measures are practiced in the building and on the playground. You can help your child develop good safety habits by providing safety instruction at home.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

1. Learn the safest route to and from school.
2. If possible, always use intersections where there is a stoplight or crosswalk guard. Please use intersections when crossing the street rather than the middle of the block. Where crosswalks are provided, stay between the lines. It is the child's responsibility to check traffic from both directions.
3. In areas where sidewalks are not available, walk on the left side of the street, facing oncoming traffic.
4. Go directly home, immediately after school is dismissed.
5. **PLEASE: Never accept rides or gifts from strangers.** Report to your teacher, principal, bus driver, crosswalk guard, police officer, or parents, any strangers seen loitering on foot or in a car near schools, playgrounds, or other places where children assemble. Try to remember the license number of the car, and write it down. Try to remember what the stranger looked like, and what he/she was wearing. Remember to contact the police anytime help is needed.

DROP OFF, PICKING UP, OR PARKING

Safety is of the highest importance at Bench Elementary. In order to try to alleviate potential traffic accidents and problems, remember we ask that drivers do the following:

- Be courteous drivers and good neighbors in the area in front of the school and on Rex Lane.
- Remember it is illegal to block a driveway or an alley. The police have reminded us that they will ticket people who block a driveway or alley or who stop in the traffic lane to load or unload children.
- Drop off your child on the school side of Milton and Rex Lane. Insure they are safely getting to the sidewalk. The parking lot is the safest area to drop off or pick up your child.
- Bus Zone – Please do not use the bus zone for dropping off or picking up your child until all of the buses have departed from the bus turn-around area. Children getting out or in cars around buses are a safety hazard. Again, the parking lot is the safest area to drop off or pick up your child.

CROSSWALK GUARD

There is a crosswalk guard assigned to assist students at the corner of Milton and Lake Elmo. The guard is assigned at the following times: 7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Students are expected to use the crosswalk at all times.

BUSES

School buses arrive at school approximately at 7:50 a.m. and depart at 2:20 p.m. and 3:05 p.m. The bus drivers cannot wait for individual students. Riding on the school bus is a privilege for those who need transportation, and student passengers must conduct themselves in an acceptable manner.

BUS POLICY

1. Behavior at the bus stop and on the bus must conform to normal school behavior (i.e., children should wait at their bus stop in a calm, mannerly fashion and sit in their seats in the same manner that they would in class.)
2. No guest riders are permitted. Only students with tickets may board the school buses, and these students must board and depart the bus only at their assigned stops.
3. Bus drivers are authorized to take the following disciplinary actions:
 - a. Verbal Warning
 - b. Seat Assignment on Bus
 - c. Written Warning (Discipline Report)*
 - d. Revocation of Riding Privileges Until Further Notice (Discipline Report)*

* A copy of the Discipline Report will be given to the rider to take home. The parents will receive a telephone call or letter from the Director of Transportation regarding the matter.

We strongly recommend that parents read, with their children, the Parent's Transportation Handbook. Bus policy will be strictly followed for the safety of each child. The Director of Transportation (281-5581) is the contact person for any problems involving your children, bus stops, and bus safety.

BICYCLES, SKATEBOARDS & ROLLERBLADES

Due to the very heavy traffic on Lake Elmo, Wicks, and Main Street, it can be very unsafe to ride on these roads. Only 2nd - 6th grades are allowed to ride their bikes to school. Because of safety issues, kindergarten and first grade students are not allowed to ride "wheel" transportation to school. Older students and their parents should make careful decisions about riding bicycles to school and should carefully go over safety rules.

Bicycle racks are provided, and bicycles should be left in the racks during school hours. Bikes will not be kept inside the school and are the responsibility of the student. Provisions should be made for locking bicycles while they are at school. The license number, serial number, and brand name should be recorded at home so that identification may be more positive, if the bicycle is stolen.

If you ride a bike:

1. It should be ridden on the right-hand side of the street. Bicycles are vehicles and should be operated under traffic regulations, signs, and signals.
2. Ride the bicycle alone. Do not ride it double.
3. Ride in single file when there is a group. Not more than two should be abreast on a clear, unoccupied street.
4. The bike should be in good working condition, including tires, steering, brakes, and drive mechanism.
5. Ride the bike courteously. A bicycle can inflict injury just like a car, if it is mishandled.
6. Walk your bike through pedestrian crosswalks and on the school grounds.
7. Students must walk their bicycles when crossing all streets.
8. Ride on the streets and sidewalks only; ride only to school grounds perimeter; walk your bike to the rack and walk the bike on the sidewalk surrounding the school or school lawn. Skateboards and rollerblades are prohibited from being ridden on school grounds.
9. For your own safety, wear a helmet. It is now a city law that all under 16 must wear helmets when riding bikes. Please remove your helmet once on school grounds. If a student consistently does not wear his/her helmet, the school may request that the student not ride the bicycle to school. If a student does not wear a helmet, the student will not be allowed to ride the bike, skateboard, rollerblade etc. home.
10. If you must ride after dark, make SURE your bike is properly equipped (white headlight, red tail light or reflector, reflective tab for visibility).

NOTE: The above rules apply to all "wheel" transportation, such as, scooters, rollerblades, skateboards etc. that children use.

If students disregard the above safety rules, the parents will be notified, and the student will not be permitted to ride his/her bike or other "wheel" transportation to school.

Heelys, rollerblades, scooters, and skateboards are not allowed on school grounds. They may be used only to the school grounds perimeter. The perimeter includes the sidewalk surrounding the school grounds. At that time, the Heely rollers or rollerblades should be removed, and skateboards or scooters should be carried or walked. These items should be turned into your teacher for safekeeping.

AFTER SCHOOL WITH TEACHER

Teachers may have to ask your child to stay after school. If he / she keeps your child longer than 10 minutes, the child must make contact with the parent. Your child will not be kept later than 3:45 pm without parental permission.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

For children K-5th the Boys and Girls club provides after school care at Bench and students stay there until picked up by a parent/guardian. Information can be obtained by contacting Glynn at gmaddox@bgcyellowstone.org

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

A school food program is maintained by the school district, and all students are entitled to eat a hot lunch, if they so desire. Students may pay for their lunches at the kitchen. Students are allowed one carton of milk with the purchase of their lunch. If students are bringing cold lunch, please do not bring carbonated drinks. These drinks often overflow accidentally and create a mess. We want students, who eat in the lunchroom to enjoy their meal, but we insist on excellent conduct and that good manners be used at all times. **As of this printing, school lunch is free.**

MULTI-TIER SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

Bench Elementary School uses the Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS). Formerly, it was call the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. MTSS is a proactive process that enables learning for all students by providing both prevention and intervention services. MTSS is the practice of providing targeted instruction matched to each student's individual needs. We use assessments to determine the student's learning and performance needs in order to make important educational decisions to guide instruction.

MTSS addresses what each child needs to learn, and how we know if the students have learned the material. Teachers at Bench use Montana Standards in Reading/Language Arts, Math and other curriculum subject standards as implemented by OPI to guide instruction. We also use assessments to track students' progress.

MTSS is a three-tiered approach, which offers a way to make sure all students in a school receive the instruction they need. At Tier 1 level all students (about 80% of the population) will be taught from our general education curriculum (core reading and math programs). Tier 2 level (about 10% of the population) provides supplemental instruction (intervention or extension) to specifically identified students. Tier 3 (about 5% of the population) is an intensive level of instruction where instruction may be different from the core program used in Tier I. Identified Gifted and Talented students and Special Education students will receive services beyond the Tier 3 level (about 5%). *All* students will receive differentiated services based on assessment and/or performance data.

This process helps ensure the best educational experience possible for all of our students. We are excited about the positive impact MTSS has in our school. We urge you as a parent/guardian to become a vital part of the MTSS process by regularly communicating with your child's teacher.

PARENT CALLS

You can call your child's teacher on our phone system and leave a voicemail anytime day or night. We understand that occasionally parents need to be able to get a message to a student about an appointment or change of plans. We are happy to accommodate these calls whenever they are really necessary. However, due to additional requirements it puts on our secretary, we are asking that these be kept to a minimum. The office phone number is 281-6203.

PARENT CONCERNS

It is courteous and respectful to discuss a problem with the teacher prior to discussing it with the principal. Often times this will resolve the problem and there will be no need to bring it to the principal. However, if you need to discuss the situation with the principal, she has an open door policy. You are more likely to catch Mrs. Welch if you call or an appointment can be scheduled.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Students are dismissed at 12:00 pm on those days. **Please call and make an appointment with the teacher for all other conferences.**

PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Students will not be allowed off the school grounds, once they have arrived at school. If the student must leave the building because of illness, medical appointment, time with parent, or any other emergency, the student must have parental written permission for that specific purpose, and/or the parent or guardian must come to the office to checkout the student.

PLAY ITEMS FROM HOME

We request that students not bring toys, games, balls, CD/DVD players, iPods, MP3 players, iPads for game use or any other personal items from home, unless specified by your child's teacher. Too often such items are lost, stolen, or destroyed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Montana Legislature passed a law requiring students in grades K-5 to recite the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. Exceptions will be made for students who decline for religious reasons.

PUPIL SERVICES

Pupil Services is the part of the Billings Education System that provides a variety of individual needs for each student. We have a trained school psychologist, counselor, and speech therapist that work with various students throughout each week. These professionals are trained to evaluate a child's individual needs and help us develop appropriate programs as necessary. This is all done with involvement and consent of the parents and/or guardians. Please don't hesitate to discuss the services available for your child, if you have questions or concerns.

DISCIPLINE, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Some of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline, respect, and responsibility for one's own behavior. While they do not appear as subjects, they underlie the whole educational structure. It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people. The school's role is to enhance and to reinforce the discipline, respect, and responsibility that are taught in the student's home environment. Billings Public Schools' Discipline Policies are mandatory for all students.

Bench staff has implemented school wide "teach-tos" to assist students with understanding the expectations we have for all students. These are certain rules and expectations that are in place for the entire school. Students are taught these expectations and they are practiced at the beginning of the year and reviewed periodically.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students attending Bench Elementary will do the following to prevent bullying:

1. Treat each other with respect
2. Refuse to bully others
3. Refuse to let other students be bullied
4. Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied
5. Try to include everyone in games and activities, especially those who are often left out
6. Try to see the other person's point of view
7. Report bullying to an adult

GENERAL RULES

Students are to REFRAIN from the following:

1. Snowball throwing
2. Fighting
3. Bringing candy, pop, or gum to school except on special occasions when teachers give permission.
4. Wearing hats in the building.
5. Playing tackle or “keep away” games at school
6. Running in the building.
7. Using inappropriate language
8. Bringing anything that can be considered a weapon to school.
9. Displaying behavior not respectful toward staff member or other students
10. Destruction of school property.
11. Bringing or using tobacco, alcohol, or drugs not prescribed by a licensed physician at any time on the school grounds.
12. Bringing toys or personal items except for “show and tell.”

Students should do the following:

1. Maintain safe play and good work practices.
2. Maintain good behavior to and from school.
3. If not having breakfast, arrive at school after 8:00 a.m.
4. Stay on the school grounds or in the building, leaving only with specific permission of the parent and teacher.

Students exhibiting the following Severe behaviors will be referred to the principal and be dealt with in accordance to the Billings Public Schools Elementary Severe Behaviors Procedure.

1. Sale, Use, Possession, or Representation of Drugs or Alcohol
2. Assault
3. Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Intimidation, Hazing, or Serious Threat
4. Electronic Use Violation (See Acceptable Use Policy)
5. Defiance, Inappropriate Behavior, Threat to Staff Member
6. Fighting
7. Inappropriate or Disruptive Behavior, Disorderly Conduct, Obscene Language
8. Property Violation
9. Sexual Discrimination and Other Harassment
10. Stealing or Extortion
11. Tobacco: Use or Possession
12. Truancy
13. Weapons (See Weapons Contract) and Explosives: Using, Possessing, Controlling, or Transferring any Object that Reasonable could be considered or Used as a Weapon

APPEARANCE AND DRESS

We expect our students to be dressed neatly and appropriately at all times. Students are reminded that their appearance significantly affects the learning environment and may even be a safety concern in some instructional areas of the school.

- Hats shall be removed inside the building.
- Students are not to wear: “doo” rags, skull caps, bandanas or any gang symbol EXCEPT for special teacher sponsored events.
- Nor may students wear apparel that may create a material or substantial disruption of the educational process; be destructive to persons or property; represent or encourage gang activity; advertise alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug paraphernalia or tobacco products; display sexual connotations; contain spikes or chains; exhibit offensive or suggestive language or graphics; or be considered offensively revealing or distasteful.

- Undergarments and shoes, (not slippers) are required. However, undergarments should be fully covered including bra straps and waistbands and tops of “boxers”. At no time should undergarments be showing through holes or tears in jeans/shirts or below the length of a skirt/shorts, etc.
- Bare midriff, see-through and backless garments are not appropriate nor are tops tied together by strings across the back or around the neck such as the “bandana” or “halter” tied tops. Students should keep their chests and backs significantly covered. Spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, (for either boys or girls), tube tops, tops with straps that do not cover undergarments, are not appropriate.
- Tank tops are acceptable if the depth of the armhole does not reveal undergarments or allow the chest and back to be visible through the armhole. See above for specifics.
- Shorts/skirts, as a general guide, should not be shorter than the thumb tip of the student’s hand when the arms are hanging at the student’s sides.

A good guideline is to dress in a manner that would be acceptable in the ‘professional’ and ‘craft’ job settings. Any other type of dress may be questioned and requests to change made.

A teacher may require additional standards of student dress as deemed appropriate in order to insure a proper safety standard for the coursework/activities required in the class (i.e. science, vocational classes, P.E., for any special project, etc.). This may extend to footwear, fabric content requirements, head coverings, safety protection, etc.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Our school counselor provides counseling and informational service to individual students and small groups. Lessons on social skills and related topics are done by the counselor in all the classrooms throughout the year. Parents, too, may request a meeting with the school counselor concerning problems related to their children.

HEALTH ENHANCEMENT

Physical education is a state requirement for all students. A doctor’s certificate is required for exemption from the course. Any student who wishes to be excused from physical education classes for any period must have a doctor’s statement to do so.

LIBRARY

No fines are levied for overdue books. We do ask that one book be returned before another is checked out. If a book is lost, the person whose name is on the library’s computer system is responsible for the replacement cost at a price agreed upon by the librarian and the principal. A nominal fine will be assessed for the repair of damaged books.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks will be furnished free of charge by the school district. However, the students are responsible for books checked out to them. If they are destroyed, lost or stolen, the students must pay for the textbook. New books are expensive (up to \$150). Textbooks are an expensive item for the taxpayer, and we urge all students to treat their books with care. Fines will be levied against students turning in books that show evidence of misuse.

*Report cards will be held until assessed fines have been paid. (See Policy 3520)

“Any teacher or principal shall have the authority to hold any pupil to strict accountability for any disorderly conduct in school or on the way to or from school, or during intermission or recess.” Mont. Code Ann § 20-4-302

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found service is maintained by the front office. Students finding articles should turn in these items to the “LOST & FOUND” area by the front office.

ASSEMBLIES

Behavior at school assemblies should be consistent with our mission of educating and inspiring students to become lifelong learners and respectful, responsible citizens. At all times students’ behaviors should be refined and courteous. An indication of the cultural level of the school is the conduct of its student body at an assembly. Whether guests are present or not, each student is personally responsible for the impression made by the school as a whole. Unacceptable conduct would include whistling, booing, uncalled-for-clapping, boisterousness, and talking during the program.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of student learning and is a question we at school get asked about by parents quite often. Some students dislike and even fear homework--primarily because they don’t know how to study. There are techniques for learning how to learn and you can help your child develop them, and equally important, you can give support and encouragement.

With the following, we will try to answer some of the most asked questions and then give some ideas, which we have about homework.

1. Homework should be practice for what you child learned at school. Let them “teach you” what they are doing. Research shows you retain 95% of what you teach.
2. Provide a quiet place to study. A desk in the bedroom is good, but the kitchen table will do. Be sure the light is adequate. Have a dictionary, paper, and pencils handy. Turn the TV down--or better, OFF.
3. Set a specific study time. Be firm in establishing a nightly homework period, perhaps right after dinner. Children need to know you expect them to do homework at a regular time. Establish a habit.
4. Do not, however, make study time completely inflexible. You don’t want your children to feel like prisoners to the homework schedule. The Wednesday night soccer game or Sunday picnic can be worked in. Make out a weekly study program and adjust study periods (maybe even double up on homework) in order to free up time for your children to go out.
5. If a child is doing hours of homework each evening, be sure and check with his/her teacher. He/she may be “socializing” in school and having you help with work at home. An important point to remember: The homework belongs to the child. You should be supportive but never actually doing the work. Many parents share the frustration of family life that may come to a halt, as “homework” becomes a daily battleground. If this is a problem for you, I am always available to observe your child’s classroom attention behavior and let you know if it is inattention to the task that is causing excessive homework.
6. Although we do not set a rigid policy about the amount of homework, we do have a guide by which we try to follow. If a child is using class time wisely, you can expect homework time to be 10 minutes for each grade level. For example, 1st grade students should be expected to spend at least 10 minutes four days per week on homework. Fourth graders could be expected to spend 40 minutes on each of those days. However, there may be rare occasions when it may be more. This usually will be due to the fact that the children will be finishing a week-long assignment.
7. If your student is constantly spending more time than what is expected or you have questions about homework, please contact your child’s teacher.

INVITATIONS, PRESENTS, FLOWERS

Invitations to student private events should not be delivered at school. It is very disruptive to the classroom when receiving the invitation especially when some students are invited and some are not.

Presents and flowers that are delivered for students will be held at the office until the teacher gives permission for the item to be picked up or delivered to the classroom.

CELLPHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students who have cell phones at school must be certain that they are turned off at all times and stored in their backpacks. Elementary students will not carry cell phones during the school day. The phones may only be used during school hours under the direction of the student's teacher. Classroom and office phones should be used whenever possible.

If a student fails to follow the guidelines, severe discipline and behavior procedures will be followed, and the cell phone may be confiscated and kept in the office. After the second offense, confiscated cell phones (ie: electronic devices) must be picked up by parents/guardians. The school is not responsible for the theft of any cellular phone.

As part of the district's Acceptable Use Policy 3205 students may not use personal electronic devices on school property, unless approved by a teacher or administrator for educational purposes. This includes cell phones, DVD players, iPods, MP3 players, iPads, eReaders, Smart Phones, Nintendo DS, Game Boys, digital cameras, Gizmos and other personal electronic devices.

Students are discouraged from having electronic devices at school. The school will not be responsible for the loss or destruction of such items (i.e. DVD players, iPods, electronic toys, radios, cameras, cell or smart phones etc.) Pagers, laser pointers, and video/camera cell phones should not be used at school. A teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator can confiscate any device that causes disruption to the overall educational climate or safety of the school. Please Remember that the school is **NOT** responsible for these items.

INTERNET ACCESS

Bench is an Internet access school. We have networking that connects us to Local Area Networks (LAN) and Wide Area Networks (WAN). Montana state standards are the basis of our curriculum and teaching at Bench, and networks are tools to enhance and practice our curriculum. **Your use of these networks is to be for educational purposes only.** Students are to be under the direction of a teacher when using the networks. Please see District Policy 3205 and 3205-P1 District-Provided Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks. If a parent prefers no Internet access, please contact the principal.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

We ask that your child come dressed appropriately for anticipated weather. Please send appropriate outer garments, boots, mittens, hats, etc. during cold weather. Our policy is that children go outside unless the wind chill is below zero. If it is raining hard or in certain other situations, we keep the children inside.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are used in the classroom by teachers to help with bulletin boards, correcting papers, tutoring etc. We use volunteers in the library to help shelve and card books and at times in the office to help with mail etc. Also, our P.T.A. needs volunteer help with all its activities. This is a wonderful way to get acquainted with our staff and students. Please contact your child's teacher or call the school if you're interested. A background check is necessary. Please ask for and complete this form at the office.

CARE AND USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are urged to take pride in their school by helping to maintain the appearance of the building, grounds, and equipment. Defacing or damaging walls, desks, or books etc. will be considered a serious offense as will depositing gum in the drinking fountain, on desks or on the wall or floor of the building.

School items, such as textbooks, library books, music instruments etc. are the responsibility of the student. The cost to replace lost or damaged items is also the student and parent's responsibility.

COMMUNITY MEDIA VISITS

At times during the school year our community TV stations, newspapers, radio stations etc. cover events at school. If for some reason you do not want your child to participate in the media videotaping, interviewing, photography, asking questions etc., please let us know as soon as possible. See the MEDIA RELEASE page in the Signature Take Home Packet for more information.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, PHONE NO., OR PARENTAL CUSTODY

If you have a change of address or phone number (or other information pertinent to your child), please log into your Powerschool Account and make those changes. Having current information is critical to ensure that we can contact you in the event of an injury to your child. In the event you can not be reached it may be necessary to have your child transported by ambulance for medical care. Accurate information is a necessity not only for the safety of our students, but also to keep the communication lines from school and home at optimum levels.

Please inform the school, if there is a dispute between divorced or separated parents regarding your child's custody. Current legal documentation of the child's custody should be given to the Principal. The school is sometimes asked to help restrict parental contact with a child. In such cases, we require a copy of legal documentation in order to comply with such a request. If joint custody of the child is in the divorce decree, the school also needs a copy of legal documentation. This will enable the school to share information about the child with both parents.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Since February of 2018 the following safety procedures have been in place at Bench Elementary:

- All visitors must show id to gain access to the building. Additionally, they must sign in and get a visitor's pass when on campus-this includes the playground and lunchroom.
- All doors are locked. The front door has a buzzer/video system for secure access to the building.

We understand this makes it less convenient to come to school and volunteer or otherwise be involved here. It is not our intent to restrict or limit parent and community involvement. We are taking these steps throughout the district to ensure that we do everything the experts recommend to keep our students and staff as safe as possible.

FIRE AND DISASTER DRILLS

Fire and/or disaster drills will be held regularly. When the alarm sounds, you must leave your room in an orderly and quiet way. Walk. Do not run. Leave the room and building by the route designated by the instructions you receive. If an exit is blocked, use the next closest exit. Fire/disaster drills are held to save lives in case of emergencies. They have a serious purpose, and no "horseplay" will be tolerated.

EMERGENCIES/CRISIS/EVACUATION SITUATIONS AT SCHOOL

On a daily basis, parents entrust schools with the safety, health and well-being of their children. Once a student steps on campus, the school is morally and legally responsible for that child until they are picked up by a parent or returned home by bus. If there is an emergency or crisis at your child's school, our district's computerized telephone system will be activated to call you with specific information you will need to know. This information might include a location and time for you to pick up your child. Please do not go directly to your child's school during an emergency until you are notified that it is safe to do so. REMEMBER...Schools will do whatever they feel necessary to keep the students safe.

PARENTS CAN HELP SCHOOLS BY;

1. **Remember to inform the school of current home and work phone numbers and any changes during the school year.** You will be notified immediately if your child becomes ill or is involved in an accident at school. If you or your emergency contact cannot be reached, your family doctor may be contacted. The numbers on the forms will be the numbers called in an emergency. If you do not fill in a phone number, communication between you and the school may be delayed. It is especially helpful to identify which two phone numbers you want called first, as these numbers will be used by our district's computerized telephone system. Make sure our office has a specific number that can reach you or a contact directly at all times. The system is not able to dial extension numbers. Please listen to the emergency message carefully.
- **Update the Student Information Forms** that are posted in your child's Powerschool Account. The information on these forms will be used in emergencies. (Please note for safety that only those people listed on the forms will be allowed to pick up your child at a Parent/Student Reunification.)
 - **Always notifying the school of any pertinent health information** about your child. This information will be helpful if your child is in need of emergency medical attention.
 - **Refraining from going directly to your child's school during an emergency,** until you are notified that it is safe to do so. Although this is a parent's first instinct, several extra panicking people will disrupt the response procedure that the staff and students have been trained to follow, possibly creating additional safety hazards for everyone involved.
 - **Refraining from taking your child** in a line that is walking to another location. This action will disrupt the procedure and interfere with student accountability at the relocation site. Instead, follow the instructions you receive on where to meet your child.
 - **Proceeding to the designated pickup location as indicated in the message** or to Albertsons on Main Street.
 - **Arriving at a Parent/Student Reunification station, with a picture ID ready to show.** Although many school staff will recognize you, there may be volunteers who are helping with this process. Please share this information with any person you've listed as having permission to pick up your child.
 - **Planning on parking away from the evacuation site.** Traffic could be congested at the evacuation site.
 - **Following** signs that will point you to check-in.
 - **Remembering** that we will need your help in order to expedite the pick-up of your student(s). Procedures will include using orderly conduct, listening and following directions, checking in, showing your ID, a parent reunification area, and any other procedure that is deemed necessary for the safety of children.

EVACUATION SITE

In the event that Bench has to be evacuated, our designated relocation building is Albertsons on Main Street. Bench students will be released from Albertsons to their parent/guardian. If the evacuation is deemed to be no longer necessary, students will return to Bench.

FERPA Annual Notification

Notification to Parents and Students of Rights Concerning a Student's School Records

The District will maintain two (2) sets of school records for each student: a permanent record and a cumulative record. The permanent record shall include: basic identifying information; academic transcripts; immunization records; and attendance records. The cumulative record may include: intelligence and aptitude scores; psychological reports; achievement test results; participation in extracurricular activities; honors and awards; teacher anecdotal records; verified reports or information from non-educational persons; verified information of clear relevance to the student's education; information pertaining to release of this record; and disciplinary information.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants parents or guardians and students over eighteen (18) years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

1. **The right to inspect and copy the student’s education records, within a reasonable time from the day the District receives a request for access.**

Parents or guardians of students less than eighteen (18) years of age and students older than eighteen (18) years of age have the right to inspect and copy the student’s permanent record. Parents, guardians or students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The District charges a nominal fee for copying, but no one will be denied their right to copies of their records for inability to pay this cost.

The rights contained in this section are denied to any person against whom an order of protection has been entered concerning a student.

2. **The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper.**

Parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper. They should write the school principal or records custodian, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify the reason.

If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student, the District will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the decision and advise him or her of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. **The right to permit disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA or state law authorizes disclosure without consent.**

Disclosure is permitted without consent to school officials with legitimate educational or administrative interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent(s)/guardian(s) or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student has enrolled or intends to enroll, as well as to any person as specifically required by state or federal law. Before information is released to individuals described in this paragraph, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive written notice of the nature and substance of the information and an opportunity to inspect, copy, and challenge such records. The right to challenge school student records does not apply to: (1) academic grades of their child, and (2) references to expulsions or out-of-school suspensions, if the challenge is made at the time the student’s school student records are forwarded to another school to which the student is transferring.

Disclosure is also permitted without consent to: any person for research, statistical reporting, or planning, provided that no student or parent(s)/guardian(s) can be identified; any person named in a court order; and appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

4. **The right to a copy of any school student record proposed to be destroyed or deleted.**
5. **The right to prohibit the release of directory information concerning the parent's/guardian's child.**

Throughout the school year, the District may release directory information regarding students, limited to: name; address; gender; grade level; birth date and place; names and addresses of parents or guardians; academic awards, degrees, and honors; information in relation to school-sponsored activities, organizations, and athletics; major field of study; and period of attendance in school.

Any parent(s) or guardian(s) or eligible student may prohibit the release of any or all of the above information by delivering a written objection to the building principal on or before the student's first day of school.

Military Recruiter Access to Information. The United States Congress recently passed legislation that requires high schools to provide to military recruiters, upon request, access to secondary school students and directory information on those students. Both the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 reflect these requirements. However, a secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing not be released without prior written parental consent.

6. **The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.**

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS

Billings Public Schools affirms that all students, staff, parents, legal guardians, volunteers, visitors, and members of the public shall have an equal opportunity to participate in, and accrue the benefits of all educational programs or activities provided by the District.

The District has appointed a coordinator to assist any employee, student, parent, or legal guardian with a Title VII / Title IX / Section 504 / Title II ADA concern. Inquiries concerning Title VII / Title IX / Section 504 / Title II ADA may be referred to Human Resource Services, Billings Public Schools, 415 North 30th Street, Billings, Montana 59101, or may be made by calling 1-406-281-5043.

Procedures established and maintained by the Superintendent address questions, concerns, and the resolution of conflicts relating to Title VII / Title IX / Section 504 / Title II ADA that may be raised by a student, staff, parent, legal guardian, volunteer, visitor, or member of the public in Billings Public Schools.

FINES AND FEES

Fines, fees, and school bills not paid may result in withholding of report cards.

GUNS AND WEAPONS POLICY

For the safety of Bench students and staff, guns and weapons are banned from our school. No student shall possess any weapon or gun on school property or at any school event. This is in accordance with school district policy formulated for student safety and state law. Any weapons' violation will result in notifying authorities and initiating long-term suspension proceedings against any student who violates this policy.

HEALTH SERVICES/ IMMUNIZATIONS/ MEDICATION

State law requires the following immunizations to be completed for school entry with documentation provided to the school:

DPT - 4 doses, one after the 4th birthday

Polio - 3 doses, one after the 4th birthday

MMR - 1 dose after the 1st birthday;

2nd dose after 4th birthday

Varicella (Chicken pox) - 2 doses

The immunizations can be acquired at the Riverstone Health Clinic as well as through local physicians. Before school begins examinations by physicians are encouraged for students entering Kindergarten.

Nurses hired by the Billings Public School System provide health service in Billings' schools. Our nurse is available only on an as needed basis, so is not always at school when minor injuries or illnesses occur. The nurse, secretary, or principal will attend to a sick or injured child who reports to the nurse's office. They will make the determination whether the child is able to go back to class or needs to go home. Our first aid is immediate and temporary. If there is some question about the sickness or injury, parents will be consulted. Parents are responsible, if further care is required. Please be sure to have your CURRENT home, work, and emergency phone numbers on file with us.

Parents should also advise the school of any allergies, chronic illnesses, or serious physical or emotional problems of the student. Upon request, the school nurse is available to provide parents with information on medical and financial resources available in the community.

If any type of medication (even aspirin) is required during school hours, we must have a signed permission slip from the child's parent or guardian. A prescription medication must have a signature from a doctor on the form that the school provides. All medications must be in their original container and will be stored in our office. If a child must have asthma medication with him/her at all times, a consent form must be signed. Medication containers must be clearly labeled: child's name, medication name, dosage, directions for taking, and the Doctor's name (Please see **MEDICATION(S) AT SCHOOL** for further information.)

The school nurse and volunteers provide vision examinations for grades K, 1st, 3rd, 5th, new students and referred students. Scoliosis (curvature of the spine) examinations are performed on all 6th grade students. Hearing examinations are provided for grades K, 1st, new students and referred students. Dental examinations are provided for all grades (light and mirror exam by dental hygienist). 5th & 6th grade students will take part in a growth and development class and AIDS education.

INSURANCE (SCHOOL)

School insurance is available to all students. Purchase of this program is optional.

LAW – ABUSE OF TEACHERS

Law 20-4-303 Abuse of Teachers – Any parent, guardian, or other person who shall insult or abuse a teacher anywhere on the school grounds or school premises shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and,

upon conviction of such misdemeanor by a court of competent jurisdiction, shall be fined no less than \$25 or more than \$500.

MEDICATION (S) AT SCHOOL

All medicine (including Tylenol and cough drops) must come to the school office in the actual medicine container and be accompanied by a consent form signed by the parent and/or doctor. All medicines are locked in the office and students must report to the office to take their medicine under proper supervision. Please note if asthma medication is needed to be with the student at all times a specific consent form needs to be signed by the parent. Consent forms are at the office. If your child takes medication daily and needs to use a cup and water, please bring the office a box of paper cups.

SMOKING, DRINKING, AND DRUG ABUSE

Smoking or use of tobacco in any form by students and all school personnel is not permitted at any time or any place on the school grounds or in the school building. Any student possessing or using alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs in the school building or on the school grounds, or while representing Bench Elementary shall be subject to immediate suspension from the activity and/or school pending a hearing before school district administration.

TRANSFER AND WITHDRAWAL SLIPS

The office must be notified about any transfer or withdrawal from Bench two days before the student leaves. All school property, such as textbooks or library books must be returned. All fines and dues must be paid. Also, a parental release of records must be signed at your new out-of-district school to request Bench records.

VANDALISM AND THEFT

Students involved in vandalism or theft of school property or when vandalizing from school property can be referred to the juvenile authorities and can be subject to suspension from school. Students and/or parents will be responsible for making full financial restitution for any damage or loss. This is considered a serious offense.

SENATE BILL 99/BOARD POLICY 2310 PROCEDURE 2

Required instruction (including but not limited to lessons, readings, texts, discussions, etc.) is part of our district curriculum. Billings Public Schools continues to follow Senate Bill 99 as well as board policy 2310 procedure 2 which states that when selecting materials, teachers, and administrators must review their content and consider the issues of violence, profanity, prurient subject matter, cultural concerns, and historical accuracy in the selection process. Objections to lessons and/or materials must be brought to the teacher's attention in writing, using the District Alternative Material Request Form. Alternatives may be available within district guidelines. If an objection is submitted, the teacher will then select an alternative option from the appropriate course/grade level guidelines to provide the students with an independent study opportunity as allowed by state law and local policy.

In addition, students may have access to a classroom teacher's library. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student's teacher for more information.