

2024-2025
Havre Public School
Transportation Dept.

Parent & Student Transportation Handbook

(Revised 06/15/2024)



PARENT & STUDENT TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

Introduction

Each year about 800-1100 students are transported to and from school by school bus each day. Every effort is made to see that the school bus ride is as safe as possible.

Our school district bus drivers believe their most important responsibility is your child's safety. This requires that the driver's attention be on the road at all times. If the driver is distracted by a misbehaving passenger, all students are at risk. We need your cooperation and support in maintaining good bus management, which is essential in sustaining the safest environment for our children.

It is suggested that each parent read this booklet and discuss its contents with those children riding the bus. We feel your support and assistance may prevent an accident.

Your child will be riding on a bus that has a camera. Our goal is to use cameras on school buses to improve student behavior, solve serious disputes, and enhance driver-student management. Surveillance cameras may be in operation inside the bus and may be used to help facilitate discipline issues.

Information regarding school bus service or other questions pertaining to transportation may be obtained by calling the school Bus Garage at 395-8556 ext. #1.

School Transportation Policy

The transporting of children to school by school bus is not mandatory; it is the option of the local Board of Trustees. The service is provided in the Havre School District for those who wish to ride under the terms established. None must ride.

The following information for parents and students states the regulations and rules. We must set up rules which must be followed. Non-compliance may be met by refusal to transport.

Route Information

It is expected that all concerned will read this booklet and in case there are any questions, ask for an explanation in order that there be no misunderstandings.

School bus routes will be established with due consideration of conditions affecting safety and number of families and students being served. Buses will not leave high-grade roads to pick up students and the routes will not be altered in any way unless a real emergency exists.

In-city patrons must not expect the bus to stop at every street or house. This is a group service and not individual taxi service.

You are also encouraged to go to this link at [Bus: Parent and Student Handbook](#) or your Parent Portal account to view your students busing information under the transportation tab, or you can call the bus

garage to get busing information. Parents and students are urged to know the bus driver's name and the bus number or animal of the AM & PM buses.

School Bus Drivers

All school bus drivers in School District 16A receive instruction in the safe methods of operating a school bus. This program includes all phases of school bus operation including actual driving experience.

School bus drivers are required to attend a pre-school clinic during August of each year. This clinic has as its main purpose detailed instructions for the driver so that the highest degree of safety will be exercised in the operation of the school bus.

School bus drivers in Montana are required to have a valid driver's license for at least five years, hold a valid Montana Commercial Driver's License, hold a valid First Aid/CPR card, pass a DOT physical examination at least every two years, and complete 10 hours of training each school year.

Safety meetings are held throughout the year and the entire bus fleet is under a continuous preventative maintenance program.

The school bus driver has the responsibility and the authority to maintain discipline on the bus. The driver has the authority to assign seats whenever he/she feels that such action is appropriate.

The riding privilege of a student may be revoked for violation of rules or for conduct which is detrimental to the safe operation of the school bus. Good conduct aboard the bus is extremely important. Nothing less will be tolerated.

Rules & Regulations

Busing to and from school is a **privilege** provided to students in grades K-12 beginning on the first day of school. Full-day kindergarten will be offered and busing to and from school will be available. Bus stops are established .4 miles from the school of attendance. Although there is no charge to receive bus service, **registration for students in grades K-5 is required at least two school days prior to when bus services are requested to begin for a child.**

Registration can be made either by calling the Transportation Department at 395-8556 ext. #1 or by registering on line by clicking on this link [Registration](#)

A permanent bus plan, including one morning pick up and one afternoon drop off location, will be established after registration. Permanent bus changes, due to the family moving, etc., will be made through the Transportation Department. Although there is no charge to receive bus service, registration for students in grades K-5 is required at least two school days prior to when bus services are requested to begin for a child.

The following rules and regulations have been developed to ensure the safest, most enjoyable and efficient transportation of your children.

Rules at the Bus Stop

1. Be on time and waiting for the bus.
2. Stay out of the road while waiting for a bus.
3. Do not participate in horseplay or destroy surrounding property.
4. Wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before attempting to board the bus.
5. Do not run toward the bus in an effort to be the first to board the bus.
6. Do not cross the street at the bus stop until traffic has stopped for flashing red lights.
7. Board the bus only at the school of attendance in the afternoon.

While Riding the School Bus

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students will comply promptly and cheerfully with any requests made by the driver regarding safety of passengers.
2. At the discretion of the driver, students may be assigned a seat and held responsible for that seat.
3. Students must be on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
4. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited.
5. Outside of ordinary conversations, students will observe classroom conduct while on the bus.
6. Students will not throw waste paper or other debris on the floor of the bus.
7. Arms or head will not be extended out of bus windows at any time.
8. Students will not get on or off, or move about the bus while it is in motion.
9. Any damage to the bus will be reported to the driver at once.
10. Students will adjust windows only when instructed to do so by the bus driver.
11. Students must be absolutely quiet while the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
12. There will be no tobacco products allowed on the bus.
13. Students will not eat food or drink beverages on the bus unless permitted to by the driver.
14. Students will not exit from the emergency door unless a bona fide emergency exists.
15. Animals, firearms, weapons, insects, bottles, balloons or any other potentially hazardous materials will not be permitted on the bus.

After Leaving the School Bus

1. Do not run or push while unloading from the bus.
2. When crossing in front of the bus, always watch for the driver to give the "all clear" signal before crossing.
3. Students should go directly from their bus stop to their homes.
4. If students must cross the road or street to get on the bus or after getting off the bus, they should cross 10 feet in front of the bus while the red lights are flashing.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT ON THE BUS

BUS Guidelines

The goal of the Transportation Department is to create the safest environment on the school bus as possible. To achieve this goal, students can and will be taught the guidelines for success. These are the guidelines:

1. **B**e respectful to the driver and other passengers.
2. **U**se a calm manner in entering, riding and departing from the bus
3. **S**afe and appropriate interactions at all times

We want a safe, caring, orderly school bus in which children can feel safe and secure while riding to and from school. To provide this safe and predictable environment on the school bus, students are required to follow the guidelines.

Students who behave appropriately will be positively rewarded with praise and a variety of different incentives. Student behavior incentive programs may be implemented for an entire bus load of students at various times during the school year.

BUS Guidelines on the School Bus

Failure to follow the rules on the bus will lead to further consequences. The student will be given a verbal warning to stop the behavior. If the behavior continues, the driver will ask the student to change seat positions at the next bus stop or pull the bus over in a safe place and require the student to change to a different seat assignment for the remainder of the ride.

Intervention Prior to Giving Behavior Warning

It is recognized that behaviors need to be redirected at the lowest level. Inappropriate behavior is an opportunity to teach correct behavior by giving the student a chance for success in a different seat on the bus. Sometimes a few words of redirection as the student is exiting the bus would be beneficial.

Behavior Warnings

Bus Behavior Warnings will be earned when early interventions are unsuccessful or if behaviors are dangerous or extremely offensive. Two copies of the Bus Behavior Warning will be issued, one for the driver and the other to be sent home with the student. The student will not be allowed to ride the bus until they bring their copy, signed by the parent or guardian, back to the bus driver.

Bus Behavior Referral

If a student is referred to the Transportation Director for inappropriate behavior, it will be for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Earning one to three Bus Behavior Warnings
2. Fighting
3. Defiance of authority (refusal to follow directions, disrespect of the driver, etc.)
4. Severe disruption
5. Vandalism
6. Other (gang-related activities, sexual harassment and other major offenses*)

A student who receives one or more Bus Behavior Referrals will receive a consequence. The parents will be contacted. The consequence may include but not be limited to the following:

1. An apology (written or verbal)
2. Warning
3. Suspension from the school bus for 2-8 days
4. After an 8 day suspension the next step is removal for the remainder of the school year.

Serious violations may result in immediate removal from district busing.

*MAJOR OFFENSES

Arson, major assault, possession of firearms, explosives, or paraphernalia designed to inflict bodily harm and use, possession, sale or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol are considered MAJOR OFFENSES and will be reported to the police. These offenses will be referred to the school principal and the offense will be considered a violation of school district policy and will be managed by the principal.

Due Process

Please remember that case law has given students the right to due process under the Constitution when being disciplined. The transportation director or school principal generally affords students their due process rights during a hearing when significant discipline may result. However, bus drivers need to provide students with oral or written notice of the charges against them as part of student due process prior to imparting discipline as well. If the student denies these charges, an explanation of the evidence the authorities (generally you or the transportation director) have is provided and an opportunity to present the student's side of the story is given. The Due Process Clause requires at least these precautions against unfair or mistaken finding of misconduct and arbitrary exclusion from school (suspension).

There need be no delay between the time notice is given and the time of the hearing. In many cases the disciplinarian may informally discuss the alleged misconduct with the student minutes after it has occurred. In giving the student an opportunity to explain his version of the facts, the student should first be told what he/she is accused of doing and what the basis of the accusation is.

Since the hearing may occur almost immediately following the misconduct, notice and hearing should precede removal of the student from school or other disciplinary action.

A student whose presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat to safety on the bus may be removed immediately from the bus. In those cases, the necessary notice and hearing should follow as soon as possible.

Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing Policy

The Board of Trustees of Havre Public Schools will strive to provide a positive and productive learning and working environment. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing by students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation means any act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, or at any official school bus stop, and that has the effect of:

- a) Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
- b) Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- c) Creating a hostile educational environment.

Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in, or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment, including, but not limited to, forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic beverage, drug, or controlled substance, forced exposure to the elements, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, sleep deprivation, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes, or permits another to be subject to wearing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome article, assignment of pranks to be performed, or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate.

Reporting: The district encourages 1) students who believe they are being subjected to bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing by anyone and/or 2) students who have first-hand knowledge of such behavior to report the matter promptly to a teacher, counselor, bus driver, coach, building administrator, or district administrator. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the matter shall be promptly investigated.

Procedures When Student Misses The Bus After School:

If the student misses the bus after school due to his/her own fault, the following procedures will be in effect:

First Offense:

When the school calls the bus garage within a couple of minutes, the bus will be called back to pick up the students.

If it is beyond the couple of minutes, the parent will be contacted and arrangements made for the child to be picked up.

If the school is unable to contact the parent, it shall contact the emergency number and make arrangements for the child.

If the parent or emergency person is unable to pick up the child, either the principal, the transportation director or a bus driver will deliver the child home.

If the school is unable to contact the parent or anyone at the emergency number, the child will be delivered to the Sheriff's Office or City Police.

Second Offense:

Refer to the process above.

A referral will be sent home.

What Can a Parent Do?

The interest and assistance of each parent is a valued asset to the Transportation program. Your interest and your emphasis on proper behavior while riding the bus is appreciated by your school bus driver. The following suggestions are ways in which you can help.

1. Insure that your children are at the bus stop a few minutes early. (Five minutes is the recommended amount of time.)
2. Dress your children in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.
3. Encourage bus safety at home. Caution your children regarding safe behavior and conduct while riding a school bus.
4. Establish a safety-minded example for your children.
5. Meet your kindergarten child at the bus stop the first time he/she rides.

Have an emergency plan in case your child misses the bus in the morning.

Emergency Weather Conditions

In the event that weather conditions create hazardous driving conditions information pertaining to closing school and sending buses home early or not running the route at all, will be broadcast over all local radio stations or on the school website.