

1 Great Falls School District

2

3 **NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS**

8110

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5 Bus Routes and Schedules

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7 The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for scheduling bus transportation, including  
8 determination of routes and bus stops. Such routes are subject to the approval of the county  
9 transportation committee. The purpose of bus scheduling and routing is to achieve maximum  
10 service with a minimum fleet of buses insofar as this is consistent with rendering safe and  
11 reasonably equal service to all bus students.

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13 In order to operate the transportation system as safely and efficiently as possible, the following  
14 factors shall be considered in establishing bus routes:

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- 16 • A school bus route shall be established with due consideration of the sum total of local  
17 conditions affecting the safety, economic soundness and convenience of its operation,  
18 including road conditions, condition of bridges and culverts, hazardous crossings,  
19 presence of railroad tracks and arterial highways, extreme weather conditions and  
20 variations, length of route, number of families and children to be serviced, availability of  
21 turn-around points, capacity of bus, and other related factors.
- 22 • The District may extend a bus route across another transportation service area, if it is  
23 necessary in order to provide transportation to students in the District’s own  
24 transportation service area. A district may not transport students from outside its  
25 transportation service area.
- 26 • No school child attending an elementary school shall be required to ride the school bus  
27 under average road conditions more than one (1) hour without consent of the child’s parent  
28 or guardian.
- 29 • School bus drivers are encouraged to make recommendations in regard to establishing or  
30 changing routes.
- 31 • Parents should be referred to the Superintendent or designee for any request of change in  
32 routes, stops, or schedules.

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34 Bus Route Changes

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36 The trustees reserve the right to change, alter, add or delete any route at such time that such  
37 changes are deemed in the best interest of the District, subject to approval by the County  
38 Transportation Committee.

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40 Bus Stops

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42 Students are required to use the bus stop nearest their legal residence or as specified by the  
43 district. Buses should stop only at designated places approved by school authorities. Exceptions  
44 should be made only in cases of emergency and inclement weather conditions.

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1 Bus stops shall be chosen with safety in mind. Points shall be selected where motorists  
2 approaching from either direction will have a clear view of the bus for a distance of  
3 approximately 150 feet in cities and approximately 500 feet in other areas before the bus is  
4 stopped to receive or discharge school children on the highway or street so motorists can see the  
5 bus lights.

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7 School loading and unloading zones at school sites are to be established and marked to provide  
8 safe and orderly loading and unloading of students. The principal or designee of each building is  
9 responsible for the conduct of students waiting in loading zones.

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11 The Board of Trustees shall approve all school bus stops requiring a child to cross a roadway.

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13 Delay in Schedule

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15 The driver is to notify the administration via the bus company's dispatcher of a delay in  
16 schedule. The Superintendent or designee will notify parents on routes through electronic  
17 communication and media, if necessary.

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19 Safety

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21 The Superintendent or designee shall develop written rules establishing the procedures for bus  
22 safety, emergency exit drills and for student conduct while riding on buses.

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24 If the bus and driver are present, the driver is responsible for the safety of their passengers,  
25 particularly for those who must cross a roadway prior to loading or after leaving the bus. Except  
26 in emergencies, no bus driver shall order or allow a student to board or disembark at other than  
27 their assigned stop unless so authorized by the Superintendent or designee. In order to ensure the  
28 safety of all, the bus driver may hold students accountable for their conduct during the course of  
29 transportation and, in collaboration with the Superintendent or designee, may recommend  
30 corrective action against a student. Bus drivers are expressly prohibited from using corporal  
31 punishment.

32  
33 The bus driver is responsible for the use of the warning and stop signaling systems and the  
34 consequent protection of their passengers. Failure to use the system constitutes negligence on the  
35 part of the driver. In accordance with Montana Law, buses shall be equipped with extended stop  
36 arms.

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38 Responsibilities – Parents

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40 The interest and assistance of each parent is a valued asset to the transportation program.  
41 Parents' efforts towards making each bus trip a safe and pleasant experience are requested and  
42 appreciated. The following suggestions are only three of the many ways parents can assist:

- 43  
44 • Ensure that students are at the bus stop in sufficient time to efficiently meet the bus.  
45 • Properly prepare children for weather conditions.

- 1 • Encourage school bus safety at home. Caution children regarding safe behavior and  
2 conduct while riding on the school bus.

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4 Responsibilities – Students

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6 Students must realize that safety is affected by individual and group conduct. Each student is  
7 responsible for following all rules and regulations regarding safety and general conduct on buses  
8 as established by the district in Policy 8110R.

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10 Inclement Weather

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12 The Board recognizes the unpredictability and resulting dangers associated with the weather in  
13 Montana. To achieve the maximum safety for children and efficiency of operation, the  
14 Superintendent is empowered to make decisions as to the emergency operation of buses, the  
15 cancellation of bus routes and the closing of school in accordance with their best judgment. The  
16 Board may develop guidelines in cooperation with the Superintendent to assist in making such  
17 decisions.

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19 Compliance

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21 To receive full state/county reimbursement, budgets must have enough funds to cover the costs  
22 of any changes to the route. The county transportation committee has authority to establish  
23 transportation service areas, should circumstances and/or geography (demographics) warrant.

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25 Cross Reference:

26 Policy 8110R Bus Route Changes

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28 Legal References:

29 § 20-10-106, MCA Determination of Mileage Distances

30 § 20-10-121, MCA Duty of Trustees to Provide Transportation - Types of Transportation -  
31 Bus Riding Time Limitation

32 § 20-10-132, MCA Duties of County Transportation Committee

33 § 61-8-351, MCA Meeting or Passing School Bus

34 § 61-9-402, MCA Audible and Visual Signals

35 Montana School Bus Standards

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37 Policy History:

38 Adopted on: July 1, 2000

39 Revised on: June 9, 2014

40 Revised on: June 10, 2024