



# Parent Information Pamphlet for School Bus Transportation

## INTRODUCTION

Billings Public Schools transports nearly 4,000 students to school each day in accordance with state and federal law and school board policy so parents need to know what is required of them and their child in regards to school bus transportation. Please take the time to review the information in this pamphlet.

Billings Public Schools contracts school bus transportation with First Student Transportation, 425 Sugar Avenue, phone 406-248-3667. **First Student owns and services the buses and hires and supervises the bus drivers who transport our students.**

Information regarding school bus services may be obtained by call the student's individual school or contacting the Transportation Office at 406-281-5580 or 406 281-5581.

## TRANSPORTATION POLCY & PROCEDURES

Transportation by school bus is not mandatory. This service is provided for those who wish to ride under the established guidelines

1. School Bus Transportation is offered to students who live over 3 mikes from their home school Distance is measured by the shortest practical route from home to school. In some cases, an Individual Transportation Contract will be issued in lieu of school bus transportation. The school district reserves the right to discontinue service when the number of eligible riders is less than 50% of capacity.
2. Limited school bus transportation is offered to K-8 students who live less than 3 miles from their home school AND reside in an established safety busing area which has been approved by the school board. Parents must pay the transportation fee which is \$75 per semester per student unless the student qualifies for Free Lunches = Free Busing or reduced Lunches = 1/2 price Busing. Additional information can be obtained from the individual school or the Transportation Office.
3. Parents are responsible for the conduct and welfare of their children to, from and while at a school bus stop.
4. **Guest riders** cannot be accommodated.
5. **Temporary travel arrangements** will not be approved outside of the established busing area and should only be requested for emergency situations. The parents must contact the Transportation Office 3 days in advance of the required bus stop change and receive approval.
6. Alternate bus stops for the school year will only be approved for 1) Students of parents who have joint custody and both parents live in an established busing area, and 2) K-8 students with a valid safety

concern that requires a 2nd bus stop within the established busing area. **Any student who is granted an Alternate Bus Stop is 100% responsible for which bus stop s/he uses on daily basis. Bus Drivers will not be required to monitor which bus stop the student will utilize on any given day.**

7. The number of bus stops in a given area will be limited.
8. Digital video and audio recorders and cameras are installed on all school buses.

## BUS REGISTRATION

If a student is not pre-registered for the school bus, the parent or student must register for school bus transportation at the front desk of the student's individual school where bus trips and maps are available for perusal.

Students who live less than 3 miles from their home school can pay to ride the school bus **under the following conditions:**

1. There must be space available on the school bus. Typically bus tickets are not issued to discretionary bus riders until the middle of September once it is determined if there is space available on the school bus.
2. The student must choose a bus stop in established busing area. The school district does not set-up bus stops outside of the established busing area.
3. The student must pay the transportation fee of \$75 per semester per student or \$150 for the school year to ride the school bus unless the student qualifies for Free Lunches = Free Busing or Reduced Lunches = 1/2 price busing. Parents may choose 1-way transportation only and the transportation fee would be 1/2 of the regular fee.

## SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE

1. Appropriate conduct aboard a school bus is absolutely essential to maintain a safe environment for transportation. Driver's are authorized to take the following action:
2. Make a seating assignment for each student
3. Give verbal warning
4. Issue written warning (Discipline Report)\*
5. Action to cause revocation of riding privileges may be taken by the Transportation Office or School Principal (or designee).\*

\*A copy of the Discipline Report will be given to the student to take home and parents will also receive a email from the Transportation Office. If the infraction warrants a suspension the Transportation Office will attempt to contact the parent by phone.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations have been developed to provide safe and efficient transportation for students.

### 1. Prior to boarding the School Bus, students should

- Be on time and waiting 5 min. early at the approved school bus stop.
- Stay off the road while waiting for the bus
- Refrain from destructive activities or behavior that is irritating to others.
- Wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop.
- Not run toward the bus in an effort to be the first to board. From a line prior to boarding.
- Cross the street ten (10) feet in front of the bus only after making sure the bus is stopped, red lights are operating, and all traffic has stopped.

### 2. While Riding the School Bus:

- The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students will comply promptly with any request.
- At the discretion of the driver, seat assignments may be made.
- Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited.
- Students will observe classroom conduct while on the bus.
- Safety dictates that no portion of the body be extended out of the bus windows.
- Littering is prohibited.
- Students will not get on or off, or be out of their seat while the bus is in motion.
- Any damage to the bus must be reported to the driver at once.
- Students may not reserve seats.
- Students will adjust windows only when instructed to do so by the bus driver.
- Students must be absolutely quiet while the bus is stopped at a railroad crossing.
- Smoking is prohibited.
- Foods and drinks may not be consumed on the bus unless authorized by the driver.
- Students will not exit from the emergency door unless a bona fide emergency exist or a bus evacuation exercise is being conducted.

### 3. Leaving the School Bus, Students:

- Must not run or push while unloading from the bus.
- Must stay away from the wheel-wells, and the side of the bus especially when departing toward the rear of the bus.
- Must walk ten (10) feet in front of the bus making sure the bus is stopped, the flashing red lights are operating, and all traffic is stopped, if required to cross the street at the bus stop.
- Should go directly home from their bus stop.

## WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Parental interest and assistance are valued assets to the Transportation Program. Your interest and safety and your emphasis on proper behavior while riding a school bus is appreciated by your school bus driver. The following suggestions are ways in which you can assist the Transportation Program.

- Insure that your children are of their bus stop 5 minutes early.
- Dress your children in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.
- Caution your children regarding safe behavior and conduct while riding school bus.
- Review the Rules and Regulations section of this booklet with your child. If you are unsure if your child understands or will comply with the rules related to boarding and leaving the bus, please arrange for the child to be supervised.
- Organize parental Supervision Teams for bus stops experiencing behavior or safety problems.
- Establish a safety-minded example for your children.
- Provide your children with a bag or pack back to carry school papers and books.

## SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

- NEVER leave your child at a bus stop in severe weather conditions.** For the student's safety. Please make arrangements to transport the student to school.
- Expect Delays. School buses will not be able to maintain a normal schedule when road conditions are bad and traffic is slow.
- If winter weather conditions necessitate **alternate bus stops**, parents will be notified through the automated phone system by 6 a.m. on the same day. For more information on Alternate Bus Stops, please visit our web page at [billings-schools.org](http://billings-schools.org).
- In inclement weather, please allow 15 minutes prior to usual pickup or drop off time before contacting the dispatcher at First Student Transportation at 406-248-3667. They have radio contact with all of the bus drivers and can find out the status of any bus route.

## SCHOOL BUS ROUTES

School Bus Routes numbers are displayed near the entrance door of the bus. Numbers on the front and sides of the bus are not route numbers and should be disregarded.

Parents should complete the following information regarding the student's school bus transportation and keep it in a convenient location for future reference.

Students Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

AM ROUTE# \_\_\_\_\_ AM PICKUP TIME \_\_\_\_\_

AM BUS STOP \_\_\_\_\_

(Student needs to be at bus stop 5 minutes before scheduled pickup time)

PM ROUTE# \_\_\_\_\_ PM DROP OFF TIME \_\_\_\_\_

PM BUS STOP \_\_\_\_\_

The Transportation Department solicits your cooperation in the continuing effort to make Billings Public School buses a safe mode of transportation for your children.