2025 - 2026
Elementary Parent/Student Handbook

Full Text of Handbook Located at:
http://www.helenaschools.org/resources/parents/handbooks

Your Helena Public Schools
...a great place to learn

The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Note: Policies and procedures may change during the school year. Changes will be noted on the District web site and in school newsletters. Changes in policy may supersede provisions found in this handbook. In case of conflict between Board Policy and any provisions in the student handbook, the provisions of Board Policy that were most recently adopted are to be followed. The District's Board Policies are available at: http://helenaschools.org

Table of Contents

DISTRICT MISSION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES 4
Letter from the Assistant Superintendent 5
STUDENT RIGHTS
Declaration of Student Rights 6
Equal Education Opportunities 6
Notice of Non-Discrimination 6
Right of Expression 6
Right to Education and the Right to Participation 7
Search and Seizure 7
Right to be Free from Sexual Harassment 7
Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention 8
Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention & Reporting Policy 8
Right to Inspect and Review Records: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) / Notice for Directory Information / Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments (PPRA) 11
Surveys 14
Publications, Video, Internet Photo Agreement 17
Right to Participate in Programs without Discrimination 17
Right to Select Personal Appearance/Student Dress 18
Right to Suggest Ways to Improve Education 18
Rights in Regard to Suspension or Expulsion 18
Rights to Equal Educational Opportunities, Title IX-Section 504-American's With Disabilities Act 20
Uniform Grievance Policy 22
GENERAL SCHOOL RULES & INFORMATION
Accident Prevention 24
Alternative Assignment Request 24
Annual Asbestos Notification 24
Appearance and Dress 25
Attendance: Absences, Tardies and Truancy 25
Behavior Expectations of Students 26
Behavior Conduct Definitions 27
Bicycles 27
Birthday/Party Invitations 27
Birthda/Party Treats 28
Birthday/Party Latex Balloons 28
Book Challenge 28
Breakfast and Lunch Program 29
Cancellation of School / Bus Delays of Cancellations 30
Cell Phones, Smart Watches, Earbuds, Headphones of Any Type 31
Change of Address (including email address) 31
Children of Military Families 31
Communication with Families 31
Crosswalks and Sidewalks 33
Emergency/Safety Drills 33
Emergency Information 33
Family Night 34
Field Trips 34
First Aid 35
Foster Care 35
GPS and Audio Child Tracking / Monitoring Systems 36
Health Services & Immunizations 36
Homeless Students 40
Lost & Found 41

Broadwater Elementary
Kellie Boedecker, Principal

Bryant School
Tia Wilkins, Principal

Central Elementary
Nick Radley, Principal

Four Georgians Elementary
Carrie Shinkle, Principal

Jefferson Elementary
Brice Burton, Principal

Jim Darcy Elementary
Jill Nyman, Principal

Kessler Elementary
Riley Thatcher, Principal

Rossiter Elementary
Wynn Randall, Principal

Smith Elementary
Sarah Simpson, Principal

Warren Elementary
Abby Kuhl, Principal

Montana Department of Justice Violent & Sexual Offenders Registry 41
Out of District Student Attendance Procedures 41
Outdoor Recess 42
Parent Portal: Automated System Opt Out 42
Parent Rights 43
Parent Rights: Surveys
Parent Volunteers 43
Participation in Club or Activity 44
Playground Safety 44
Policy Dealing with School Overcrowding 46
Public Health Emergency 46
Recording Meetings – Not Allowed 47
Release of Students from School 47
Religious Practices 47
Saturday School 48
School Age Child Care Program Information (SACC) 48
School Bus Transportation/District Bus Service 48
School Safety 52
Service Animals 52
Sexual Harassment 53
Student Discipline 54
Student Insurance 54
Threat Assessment Protocol 54
Visitor Procedure 55
Videotaping of Students 55
Weapons 56

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Curriculum and Instruction 56
PEAK gifted and Talented Services 57
Human Sexuality Instruction / Identity Instructioj 57
Kindergarten Entry Requirements 57
Libraries 58
Multi Linguistic Learners 58
Montessori Charter School 58
Special Education Services 59
Student Assessment 61
Student Support: Multi-Disciplinary Team Model 62
Title 1 62
Technology Use Agreement for 2025-2026 62

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

School Board Meetings 68
Getting an Item Placed on the School Board Agenda 68
Role of the Board of Trustees 68
2025-2026 School Year Calendar 70
Helena Public Schools Principals 71
2025-2026 HPS Parent Permission Form 72
Parent Volunteer Application Form 73
Authorization to Carry & Administer Asthma Medication 74
Helena Public Schools Bell Schedule 76

Vision

Helena Public Schools foster dynamic educational experiences that prepare all students for life.

Mission Statement

The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

This mission will be supported through the wise use of resources to meet students' needs, regardless of interests and talents. Students, families, educators and the community are committed to sharing the responsibility for creating a student-centered educational community that acknowledges learning as a life- long process.

Guiding Principles

- Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
- Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.
- Each graduate is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

Board of Trustees

Determining, with the community, the major directions and purposes of public education is a responsibility of the local Board of Trustees assisted by the personnel of Helena School District No. 1.

Jennifer McKee (Chair)..... Jennifer Walsh (Vice-Chair)
Janet Armstrong ..... Siobahn Hathhorn
Rachel Robison……. ..... Linda Cleatus
Jenny Murnane-Butcher.. .....Kay Satre

High School Student Representatives
Brock Gardipee - HHS
Delaney Lynch - CHS

To Our Partners in Learning,

In Helena Public Schools, our elementary classrooms are more than places of learning. These spaces are communities where every child is known, valued, and challenged to grow. With both pride and purpose, we strive every day to create safe, caring, and academically rich experiences for all students.

As a parent with children in our schools and as the spouse of a Helena teacher, I have the privilege of experiencing our district through both a parent and leadership lens. I hold deep gratitude for our teachers, paraeducators, administrators, and all support staff. Their dedication to children is evident in every lesson taught, every encouraging word offered, and every effort to ensure a child feels safe and capable.

Strong partnerships between home and school are at the heart of our work. We believe every student can achieve at high levels, and we commit to holding high expectations while providing the support each child needs to succeed. I encourage you to stay connected—reach out to your child's teacher or principal with questions, ideas, or concerns. Together, we can ensure that each student feels secure, cared for, ready to learn, and has the academic achievement that is right for them.

We understand the trust you place in us each day when you send your children to school. We take seriously our responsibility to not only help them master academic skills, but also to prepare them for life instilling curiosity, resilience, and compassion along the way.

Thank you for sharing your children with us. It is a privilege to walk alongside them on their

educational journey.

With respect and commitment,

Justine Alberts, Ed.D

PreK-5 Assistant Superintendent & Curriculum

STUDENT RIGHTS

Declaration of Student Rights

Helena School District No. l has high academic expectations for all students. The District is committed to providing all students an excellent, well-rounded educational program. With this commitment in mind, the District sets forth the following: all students are provided the opportunity to obtain a basic body of understandings, attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed for living in a democracy and the world community. The opportunity for development of intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and aesthetic appreciation shall be provided.

These rights and responsibilities provide a uniform standard of conduct, which emphasizes the maintenance of an atmosphere where orderly learning is possible and encouraged. It defines student rights, student responsibilities, disciplinary procedures, and actions to be taken.

Equal Educational Opportunities

Equal educational and extracurricular opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ancestry, marital status, military status, citizenship status, culture, social origin or condition, political affiliation, mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic and other legally protected categories.

See: Board Policy: 3000 Equal Educational Opportunities

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Helena Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following department has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Human Resources Department
1325 Poplar Street
Helena, MT 59601
406.324.2010

Inquiries may also be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

Right of Expression

Students enjoy the right of expression as provided by state and federal law. The student may not, by speech or conduct, materially disrupt class work or educational programs, cause substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others, or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline, education programs or other activities in the operation of the school or conduct themselves in a manner inconsistent with the school’s and district's educational mission.

The use of vulgar, offensive, lewd or indecent speech or conduct is prohibited in the District.

Right to Education and the Right to Participation

A student is the center of the school and the purpose for which it is operated and maintained. Students have the inherent right to be treated with dignity and respect. A student has the right to a non-disruptive education as provided by law and school board policies. Correspondingly, the student has a responsibility not to deny the right to an education to any other student.

Search and Seizure

School authorities maintain supervision, control and jurisdiction of students who participate in or attend any school activity on or off School District premises. The building principal or designee is authorized to search a student, locker, cell phones or other electronic devices, personal property, (e.g. wallets, purses, pockets, book bags) while on or off school premises, at a school sponsored activity, or while on school transportation in transit to and from a District activity or sponsored activity, or while transit on a school bus or other transportation authorized by the District.

A search may be conducted provided the school authority has reasonable suspicion as to a violation of law, school policy or school rules. School authorities shall confiscate any illegal, unauthorized or contraband items discovered during such inspections. School authorities shall determine appropriate action, including notification of parents, notification of law enforcement authorities and commencement of disciplinary proceedings.

Reasonable suspicion means there are reasonable factual grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence the student has violated or is violating local, state or federal law or a rule of the District.

Evidence produced by a search may be used in a disciplinary proceeding against the student.

See Board Policy 3040 Search and Seizure

Right to Be Free from Sexual Harassment

A student has the right to attend and participate in school activities in an environment free from sexual harassment. The District does not tolerate sexual harassment in any form.

Sexual Harassment Prevention

The policy of the Board of Trustees of Helena Public Schools is to provide students with a school environment free from sexual harassment. Schools will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form.

"Sexual Harassment" means: a) sex discrimination within the meaning of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Montana Human Rights Act; b) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature; or when conduct of a sexual nature creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment. An intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment includes sexually-oriented jokes, innuendoes, obscenities, pictures or any action with a sexual connotation that makes a student feel uncomfortable in the school environment or that affects the school environment, whether or not sexual in connotation, that is directed toward a student based on the student's sex; and c) conduct of a sexual nature that is prohibited according to Montana State Law.

Students who believe they are being subjected to sexual harassment by anyone connected with Helena Public Schools should, and are encouraged to, report the mater promptly to their teacher, counselor, or

principal, or to the Helena Public School's EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) officer at 324-2010.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Quid pro quo: An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct

2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity;

or

3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), , or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

A determination of responsibility resulting from a formal complaint against a student for engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense. Complaints may be submitted via the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure.

See also 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment, Hazing Prevention and Reporting Policy

Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention

All students have the right to learn in an atmosphere free of intimidation, hostility, and offensiveness. Students are not to engage in harassment of any kind. Harassment in any form will not be tolerated, including the use of any technologies (e.g. cell phones, internet, etc.)

Examples of prohibited harassment are:

- Unwelcome advances, gestures, comments, or contact,
- Threats,
- Offensive jokes, and
- Ridicule, slurs, derogatory action or remarks.

Students who feel that they are being harassed should first tell the harasser to stop. If the harassment continues, students should make an immediate report to a teacher, administrator, or other adult working at the school. The teacher or administrator will inform the student of the established grievance procedure and will assist the student in completing & filing the grievance, as appropriate.

Substantiated charges of harassment against a student will subject the student to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion.

The Helena Board of Trustees has adopted the following: Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention and Reporting Policy: Board Policy: 3005

Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention and Reporting Policy

The Board is committed to providing students with a safe and civil school environment free from harassment, intimidation and bullying. The District will not tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying

in any form at school, school-related events (including off campus events), school sponsored activities, school buses or any event related to school business. Bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing by students, staff or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to: inciting, aiding, encouraging, coercing or directing others to commit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The District expressly prohibits any form of intimidation, hazing, bullying or harassment including but not limited to the following: any gesture or written, verbal or physical act that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, creed, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, citizenship status, culture, social origin or condition, marital status, military status, political affiliation or a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic and other legally protected categories.

Intimidation, bullying and harassment include acts that a reasonable person knew or should have known, under the circumstances the gesture or written or physical act (a) will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property; or (b) will place a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property; or (3) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student.

Definitions:

1. "Third parties" include but are not limited to coaches, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors or others engaged in District business, such as employees of businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work program with the District, and others not directly subject to District control at inter-district and intra-District athletic competitions or other school events.

2. "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.

3. "Bullying" means any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication (cyberbullying) or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe, or repeated, and that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, that take place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, at any official school bus stop, or anywhere conduct may be reasonable be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a student or staff member or an interference with school purposes or an educational function, 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, or;

d. Substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

4. "Electronic communication device" means any mode of electronic communication, including but not limited to computers, cell phones, the internet, or any other technological communication innovation.

Sexual Harassment Prohibited

Sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

(1) An employee of the District conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
(2) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity; or
(3) "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30).

Reporting

Students who believe they are victims of sexual harassment are encouraged to discuss the matter, including the formal complaint process, with the Title IX Coordinator. Students who believe they are victims of harassment based upon a disability are encouraged to report the matter to the Section 504 Coordinator or Principal. Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same sex if alleging a violation of Title IX. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate.

Any adult school employee, adult volunteer, district contractor or agent who witnesses, overhears or receives a report, formal or informal, written or oral, of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall report it in accordance with procedures developed under this policy. Any adult school employee who has notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment shall make a report to the District's identified Title IX Coordinators. All other complaints are handled through the District's Uniform Grievance Procedure.

Formal complaints alleging sexual harassment shall be addressed through the District's Title IX Grievance Procedures. Formal complaints alleging sexual discrimination complaints shall be addressed through the District's Uniform Grievance Procedure. Complaints alleging disability discrimination or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Section 504 [and ADA if applicable] Grievance Procedures. All other complaints alleging bullying, discrimination, or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Uniform Grievance Procedure.

The Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 [and ADA if applicable], and/or administrator are responsible for taking the following actions in conformance with the applicable grievance procedure:

1. Taking prompt action to investigate/report complaints of harassment, intimidation and bullying.
2. Promptly notifying the complainants and respondents and their parents/guardians regarding the outcome;
3. Taking supportive or remedial measures to ensure continued access to the District's programs or activities while the grievance process is pending; and
4. Taking disciplinary action as appropriate and any other actions appropriate to address the harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

In the event that a staff member or administrator knows or reasonably believes that the alleged behavior constitutes criminal activity or child abuse or neglect, the staff member or administrator shall report such activity to law enforcement and/or the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Nothing herein prohibits other individuals from reporting complaints to law enforcement. If it is determined that the alleged harassment, intimidation, or bullying did not occur at school or school-related activity or does not materially or substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the District, an administrator shall refer the matter, as appropriate, to other persons or entities with appropriate jurisdiction, including but not limited to law enforcement or the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

All staff are obligated to address bullying, harassment, hazing and intimidation as described in Board Policy 5015, administrative procedures and / or staff and student handbooks.

Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies

A person alleging violation of any form of harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication, as stated above, may seek redress under any available law, either civil or criminal, after exhausting all administrative remedies.

Responsibilities

The District Administration shall be responsible for ensuring that notice of this policy is provided to staff and third parties and for the development of administrative regulations, including reporting and investigative procedures, as needed.

Consequences

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Third parties who behavior is found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate sanctions as determine and imposed by the District Administrator or the Board. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Retaliation and Reprisal

Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, whether or not a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment & Hazing Prevention and Reporting Policy: Board Policy: 3005

Right to Inspect and Review Records: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) / Notice for Directory Information / Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments (PPRA)

Definition: *person is any student, parent, legal guardian, or person with parental authority.*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

Parents receive annual notice via the handbooks of their FERPA rights as noted below.

These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day school receives a request for access.

2. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

   By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records, if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

   The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher, records pertaining to former students of the District, and records maintained by school law enforcement officials for purposes other than school discipline do not have to be made available to the parents or student. Access will also not be granted to the parent or the student to confidential letters and recommendations concerning admission to a post-secondary educational institution, applications for employment, or receipt of an honor or award, if the student has waived his or her right of access after being advised of his or her right to obtain the names of all persons making such confidential letters or statements.

3. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask school to amend a record should write the school principal clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or

grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer 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 school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Helena Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Listed below are disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent:

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in 34 C.F.R. 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student.

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(*1*) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(*2*) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))

- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))

- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State- supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.

(§99.31(a)(4))

- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))

- The District may disclose student records or information to the youth court and law enforcement authorities, pertaining to violations of the Montana Youth Court Act or criminal laws by the student.

- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))

- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))

- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))

- To caseworkers or other Child Protective Services representatives when DPHHS/CPS is legally responsible for the care and protection of the student. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L).

- The District may disclose student records in a court proceeding where the parent is a party to an action involving child abuse or neglect or dependency matters without parental consent or notification if ordered to make this disclosure.

- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10)

- Information the school has designated as "directory information" under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11)

See also Policy 3080 Maintenance of Student Records.

Surveys

Parents have the right to inspect any survey or evaluation and refuse to allow their child to participate in such survey or evaluation that does not require the collection of personally identifiable information and is not necessary and essential for establishing the student's education record or validating an achievement test for admission to a postsecondary institution.

Parents have the right to opt their student in to a survey or data collection that requires the collection of personally identifiable information and is not necessary and essential for establishing the student's education record or validating an achievement test for admission to a postsecondary institution.

Privacy Matters – Photographs and Social Media

Because of the advent of cell phones and social media, it has become almost impossible to fully protect

the privacy rights of any individual from having his or her picture taken and shared with others. Parents have the right to annually opt out of having the District share their child's photograph in publications or through District media events. The District will honor any parent opt-outs and not share this information.

However, the District cannot prevent others who are present from sharing photos and videos from school events open to parents and/or the public, including but not limited to public performances, dress rehearsals, music performances, sporting events, athletic practices open to the public, athletic competitions, open assemblies, or field trips.

Notice for Directory Information

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Helena Public Schools with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Helena Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Helena Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Student directories;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. [1]

If you do not want the Helena Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by the third Friday in November. Helena Public Schools have designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Telephone listing
- Photograph
- Dates of attendance
- Address
- Electronic mail address
- Date of birth
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)*
    1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
    2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
    3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
    4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
    5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
    6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
    7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
    8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –
    1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
    2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
    3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –
    1. Protected information surveys of students;
    2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
    3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Helena Public Schools have developed and adopted policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

Helena Public Schools will directly notify parents via the District web site of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Helena Public Schools will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Helena Public Schools will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.

- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20202

See also Board Policy: 2020 Student and Family Privacy Rights

Publications, Video, Internet Photos Agreement

Students who attend school in Helena School District No. 1 are occasionally asked to be part of school and/or district publicity, publications, district and school web site publications, media events (e.g. newspaper, television, etc.) and/or public relations activities.

If you do **NOT** want your child to be included in any publications and/or public relations activities please indicate by marking the appropriate answer and signing the "Parent Permission Master Form: available at the school's front office, online or on page 73 of this handbook.

Right to Participate in Programs without Discrimination

A student shall not be excluded, expelled, limited or otherwise discriminated against in the terms, conditions, benefits or privileges of the District educational program or activity, because of race, creed, religion, gender, marital status, color, age, physical or mental handicap or disability, or national origin unless based upon lawful grounds, including adopted policies of the Helena Board of Trustees.

A student may not be denied participation in District education programs or any sponsored activity except for such reasons as are provided in the adopted policies and procedures of the District; student code, federal, state and county associations or governmental entities; or guidelines for activities with tryouts or organizations that sponsor activities, such as the Montana High School Association.

Non-Discrimination Notice

The Helena School District #1 strives to comply with all federal and state rules and regulations. The Helena Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in education programs and/or extracurricular school activities. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Title IX officer and/or Section 504/ADA Coordinators who have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:

Principal at Your Child's School
Title IX Building Coordinator ADA/Section 504 Building Coordinator Helena, Montana 59601

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, visit http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Right to Select Personal Appearance / Student Dress

A student and his/her parent or legal guardian determine a student's pattern of personal appearance. Personal appearance includes dress, grooming and personal hygiene. The personal appearance of a student shall be respected provided it does not interfere with the health and safety of the student or others and does not materially or substantially disrupt the education process. Clothing advertising tobacco, alcohol, drugs, violence or lewd, vulgar or obscene displays may not be worn in school because school authorities find such to be materially or substantially disruptive to the education process and because such

apparel may be offensive to others and does not comport with a positive educational atmosphere or is inconsistent with the school's basic educational mission.

General appearance guidelines include but are not limited to the following:

- Hair - Any hairstyle is permitted so long as it is kept neat, clean and controlled.
- Foot Apparel - For sanitary reasons shoes or sandals are to be worn. Footwear that converts into rolling shoes is considered hazardous and is not allowed.
- Girls' and Boys' Apparel - Any style of clothing is allowed when worn with sensible discretion.
- All students are required to be neat and clean in appearance.
- Students shall not wear clothing or jewelry that advertises/reference tobacco, alcohol, drugs, gangs or other harmful substances.
- Items worn on the head that are materially disruptive to the education process or create visual and/or hearing impairment for the student or other students may not be worn in school.
- Students shall not wear costumes such as ears, tails, flags, non-medical masks, etc. Exceptions may be made for Halloween or school theatre productions.

Right to Suggest Ways to Improve Education

A student has the right to contribute information that will be considered when decisions are made that affect the quality and content of their education. The District encourages and expects all students to take responsibility for their education, including preparing for, and participating in, class and school activities, taking full advantage of learning services provided, helping design their educational goals, and conducting themselves respectfully and appropriately.

Rights in Regard to Suspension or Expulsion

The following procedure is available to all students who are subject to suspension or expulsion:

Basic Rights:

- A student shall be informed of the nature of the violation for which he or she is charged, the evidence of that violation and the potential maximum corrective disciplinary action.
- A student shall have the right to explain his/her actions.
- A student has the right to appeal the decision of the principal to the Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee.

Suspension Procedure

The following procedural rules shall apply to a student charged with a violation for which maximum disciplinary action is in-school or out-of-school suspension:

- The principal or the principal's designee shall have the authority to suspend a student.

- Prior to suspension, the student shall be informed of the charges.
- Except in the case of an emergency, the student will be allowed to respond to the allegations before the administrator issues a decision regarding the suspension.
- Inform the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student's suspension prior to releasing the student. Once informed parents must come to the school and pick up their student. A suspended student will remain in the office under adult supervision until the parent or guardian arrives & signs the child out for the length of the suspension.

Expulsion Procedure

The following procedural rules shall apply to a student charged with a violation whose maximum disciplinary action imposed is expulsion.

The building principal may recommend the expulsion of a student to the District Superintendent. The principal shall provide the District Superintendent, parent, legal guardian or person with parental authority written notification that will include the following:

- The alleged violation(s) committed by the student.
- Facts and circumstances setting forth the misconduct upon which the recommendation is based.
- Recommendation outlining whether the student should be granted credit for work completed in the present semester.
- Recommended length of expulsion.

Upon completion of the principal's written recommendation, the District Superintendent or his/her designee shall:

- Conduct a meeting to determine whether the student shall be reinstated into the Helena Public Schools, if requested by the parent, legal guardian, or person with parental authority. If the student is not reinstated after the meeting with the principal and the District Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the student and parent or legal guardian in writing:
- that the District Superintendent and principal shall recommend expulsion to the Board of Trustees;
- of the student's right to request a hearing of the charges before the Board of Trustees, to present a defense to the charges; to be represented by another person; to confront, examine and cross-examine witness(es); and to present information against the expulsion recommendation;
- of the maximum length of the expulsion being recommended;
- the time, date and place of a hearing before the Board of Trustees, who shall consider the recommendation for expulsion.

Board of Trustees Hearing

Only the Board may expel a student from school. After the administration has investigated the alleged misconduct, and made the decision to recommend an expulsion of the student to the Board, a Board Meeting shall be scheduled and the administration shall send a written notice to the student and the parent outlining the following:

- the intent to recommend an expulsion;
- the specific charges against the student;
- what rule or regulation was broken;
- the nature of the evidence supporting the charges;
- the date, time and place where the Board Meeting will be held;

- a copy of the procedure that will be followed by the Board;
- a reminder of the rights the student and parents have, including the right to counsel, the right to cross examine witnesses, and the right to present witnesses.

The hearing may be rescheduled by the parent by submitting a request to the Superintendent showing good cause at least 3 school days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing. The Superintendent shall determine if the request shows good cause.

After the hearing, the Board of Trustees shall decide whether to accept, reject, or modify the recommendation and direct the District Superintendent to inform the student, parent, legal guardian, or person with parental authority, of such action.

Suspension and Expulsion as it Relates to District Provided Transportation Services

Suspension or expulsion from school may also result in suspension from district sponsored transportation services.

It is important to note that students may also be suspended or expelled from riding any district sponsored transportation services for conduct violations occurring on district school buses even if they are still being allowed to attend school.

Rights to Equal Educational Opportunities, Title IX-Section 504-American's With Disabilities Act

Equal Educational Opportunities

Equal educational and extracurricular opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religious beliefs, physical and mental handicap, or disability, or actual or potential marital or parental status. The District will not knowingly enter into agreements with any entity or any individual that discriminates against students on the basis of sex or any other protected status. Any student may file a discrimination grievance by using the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

No student shall, on the basis of sex, be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage, or denied equal access to educational and extracurricular programs and activities. Any student may file a sex equity complaint by using the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

Inquiries regarding discrimination of any kind should be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator, who shall provide information and, if necessary, direct the individual to the Uniform Grievance Procedure. The District will annually publish notice of these rights to students and parents.

Title IX Grievance Procedures

The Helena School District has adopted internal grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 Act (Title IX). Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities operated by public school districts. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities.

All references to sex discrimination throughout these procedures include gender-based harassment and sexual harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping, even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur whenever an individual makes sexual advances,

requests sexual favors, and engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

In the case of a student, denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or in the case of an employee denies or limits the employment, recruitment, consideration, or selection or treatment, or that makes such conduct a condition of the employee's employment status; OR

Has the purpose or effect of:

- substantially interfering with a student's educational environment or employee's work environment;
- creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment;
- depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or depriving an employee of the benefits of or deprives that employee of employment opportunities; or
- making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for academic decisions affecting a student or employment decisions affecting an employee.

Sexual harassment includes sexual violence. Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol or is unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Sexually violent acts include rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

District Title IX Coordinator

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Human Resources Director
1325 Poplar St.
Helena, MT 59601
406.324.2010

Inquiries may also be referred to the Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education.

Filing a Complaint

An individual believing that he or she has been the victim of sex discrimination should file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator within 30 days of the incident(s) giving rise to the allegations. If the individual wishes to invoke the formal complaint procedures (see formal complaint procedures section), the complaint should be made in writing. An individual wishing to invoke the informal resolution process may make a complaint in writing or verbally.

An individual wishing to make a complaint will be provided with a copy of both the informal resolution procedure and the formal complaint procedures.

Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services.

For those students who need or are believed to need special instruction and/or related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District has established and implemented a system of

procedural safeguards. Safeguards include a students' identification, evaluation, and educational placement.
This system includes notice, an opportunity for the student's parent or legal guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student's parent or legal guardian, and a review process.

School District No. 1 has appointed an officer to assist any employee, student, parent, or legal guardian with a Section 504/ADA concern. Inquiries concerning Section 504/ADA may be referred to the Central Administration Office, 1325 Poplar Street, Helena, Montana, 59601, or may be made by calling 1- 406-324-2010.

Procedures have been established for addressing any questions or concerns and for resolving any conflicts relating to Title IX/Section 504/ ADA that may be raised by an employee, student, parent, or legal guardian in School District No. 1. A copy of those procedures may be obtained from building Principals or the Central Administration Office.

See: Board Policy 2050 – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504).

Uniform Grievance Policy

The Board establishes this Uniform Complaint Procedure as a means to address complaints arising within the District. This Uniform Complaint Procedure is intended to be used for all complaints except those governed by a specific process in state or federal law that supersedes this process or by a collective bargaining agreement. Matters covered by a collective bargaining agreement will be reviewed in accordance with the terms of the applicable agreement.

The District will endeavor to respond to and resolve complaints without resorting to this formal complaint procedure and, when a complaint is filed, to address the complaint as outlined in this policy. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by a person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to pursue other remedies and use of this complaint procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to pursuit of other remedies.

The District requires that all individuals use this complaint procedure when the individual believes the Board or its employees or agents have violated the individual's rights under state or federal law or Board policy. Complaints against a building administrator shall be filed with the appropriate Assistant Superintendent. Complaints against a District level administrator shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent or Clerk shall be filed with the Board.

When a complaint alleges sexual harassment or a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (the Civil Rights Act), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the building administrator shall turn the complaint over to the applicable District nondiscrimination coordinator. The coordinator shall ensure an investigation is completed in accordance with the applicable procedure. In the case of a sexual harassment or a Title IX complaint the applicable investigation and appeal procedure is Policy 3000 or 5005. In the case of a disability complaint, the coordinator shall complete an investigation and file a report and recommendation with the building administrator for decision. Appeal of a decision in a disability complaint will be handled in accordance with this policy.

Deadlines requiring District action in this procedure may be extended for reasons related but not limited to the District's retention of legal counsel and District investigatory procedures. Additional timelines may

be waived with the agreement of both parties.

Retaliation

Any individual participating in an investigation or proceeding under this policy shall notify the appropriate building or district administrator if that person believes that he or she is being retaliated against for participating in the investigation or proceeding. The District prohibits retaliation against individuals making complaints and/or participating in any investigation that may ensue under this policy. The District may discipline students or staff members determined to have retaliated against any individual for participating in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

Level 1: Informal

An individual with a complaint is first encouraged to discuss it with the appropriate employee or building administrator with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. If the complaint can't be resolved within (fifteen)15 school days of the incident that generated the complaint, then the complainant may file a written complaint as outlined in Level 2.

Level 2: Building Administrator

When a complaint has not been or cannot be resolved at Level 1, an individual may file a signed and dated written complaint stating: (1) the nature of the complaint; (2) a description of the event or incident giving rise to the complaint, including any school personnel involved; and (3) the remedy or resolution requested. The written complaint must be filed within fifteen (15) school days of the event or incident.

When a complaint alleges a violation of Board policy or procedure, the building administrator or supervisor will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint. The administrator or supervisor will respond in writing to the complaint, within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the written complaint.

If the complainant disagrees with the findings of the administrator or supervisor the complainant may request, in writing, that the appropriate Assistant Superintendent review the administrator's or supervisor's decision. (See Level 3.) This request must be submitted to the appropriate Assistant Superintendent within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the administrator's or supervisor's decision.

Level 3: Assistant Superintendent

If the complainant appeals the administrator's or supervisor's decision provided for in Level 2, the Assistant Superintendent will review the complaint, any relevant documents and the administrator's or supervisor's decision. The Assistant Superintendent will respond in writing to the appeal, within fifteen (15) school days of the Assistant Superintendent's receipt of the written appeal.

If the complainant disagrees with the findings of the Assistant Superintendent the complainant may request, in writing, that the Superintendent consider an appeal of the Assistant Superintendent's decision. (See Level 4.) This request must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of the Assistant Superintendent's written response to the complaint.

Level 4: Superintendent

If the complainant appeals the Assistant Superintendent's decision provided for in Level 3, the Superintendent will review the complaint and the Assistant Superintendent's decision. The Superintendent will respond in writing to the appeal, within fifteen (15) school days of the Superintendent's receipt of the written appeal.

If the complainant disagrees with the findings of the Superintendent, the complainant may request, in writing, that the Board consider an appeal of the Superintendent's decision. (See Level 5) This request

must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of the Superintendent's written response to the complaint, for transmission to the Board.

Level 5: The Board

Upon written appeal of a complaint alleging a violation of the individual's rights under state or federal law or Board policy upon which the Board of Trustees has the authority to remedy, the Board may consider the decisions made in Level 2, 3 and 4. Upon receipt of written request for appeal, the Chair will either; place the appeal on the agenda of a regular or special Board meeting or respond to the complaint with an explanation of why the appeal will not be heard by the Board of Trustees in accordance with this policy. The Board will report its decision on the appeal, in writing, within thirty (30) school days of the Board meeting at which the Board considered the appeal or the recommendation of the panel.

A decision of the Board is final, unless it is appealed pursuant to Montana law within the period provided by law.

See also Board Policy 1085 Uniform Complaint Procedure

General School Rules and Information

Accident Prevention

School staff will do everything possible to prevent accidents. However, parents/guardians must understand that some activities such as recess play, physical education activities or field trips involve inherent risks to the student regardless of all feasible safety measures that may be taken by the district.

In consideration of your agreement to allow your child to participate in these activities, you agree to accept responsibility for any loss, damage, or injury to your child that occurs during your child's participation in these activities that is not the result of fraud, willful injury to a person or property or the willful or negligent violation of a law by a trustee, employee, or agent of the Helena School District #1.

Alternative Assignment Request

The Board recognizes the right of an individual parent or guardian to request that his or her child not read a given book, utilize specific curriculum materials or view a particular media work. Therefore, procedures for requesting an alternative assignment for an adopted curriculum assignment must be followed and can be obtained from the building administrator or District Curriculum Administrator.

Annual Asbestos Notification

In the past, asbestos was used extensively in building materials because of its insulating, sound absorbing, and fire retarding capabilities. All Helena School District buildings constructed before the late 1970s contain some level of asbestos. Intact and undisturbed asbestos materials generally do not pose a health risk. Asbestos materials, however, can become hazardous when, due to damage or deterioration over time, they release fibers. If the fibers are inhaled, they can lead to health problems, since as cancer and asbestosis.

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) which requires schools to be inspected to identify any asbestos containing building materials. Suspected asbestos-containing building materials are located, sampled (or assumed) and rated according to condition and potential hazard. Every three years, Helena Public School District has conducted a reinspection to determine whether the condition of the known or assumed asbestos containing building materials

(ACBM) has changed and to make recommendations on managing or removing the ACBM. At the last reinspection conducted during September 2020, all materials listed in the Management Plan as asbestos containing (or assumed to be asbestos containing) were inspected and recertified.

The law further requires an asbestos management plan to be in place by July 1989. Helena Public School District has developed a plan, as required, which has been continually updated. The plan has several ongoing requirements: publish a notification on management plan availability and the status of activities; educate and train its employees about asbestos and how to deal with it; notify short-term or temporary workers on the locations of the asbestos containing building materials; post warning labels in routine maintenance areas where asbestos was previously identified or assumed; follow set plans and procedures designed to minimize the disturbance of asbestos containing building materials; and survey the condition of these materials every six months to assure that they remain in good condition.

Since the Fall of 2016 asbestos containing building materials have been removed, encapsulated, or enclosed in the following buildings: Helena High School, Capital High School, C. R. Anderson Middle School, Helena Middle School, Hawthorne Elementary School, Rossiter Elementary School, Four Georgians Elementary School, Warren Elementary School, Broadwater Elementary School, Smith Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School, Kessler Elementary School.

It is the intention of Helena Public School District to comply with all federal and state regulations controlling asbestos and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure students and employees a healthy and safe environment in which to learn and work. You are welcome to review a copy of the asbestos management plan at the District Facility office at 1201 Boulder Ave during regular business hours. The Facilities Director is the District's designed asbestos program coordinator, and all inquiries regarding asbestos plan and asbestos-related issues should be directed to the Facilities Director at 324.1720.

Appearance and Dress

Students' dress and grooming must not disrupt the educational process, interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching/learning climate, or compromise reasonable standards of health, safety, and decency.

While matters of dress remain the primary responsibility of students, in consultation with their parents or legal guardians, students are reminded that their appearance significantly affects the way others respond to them.

Attendance: Absences, Tardies, & Truancy

In the event of a student's absence, the parent/guardian should call, send a note, or use electronic communication to notify the school by 8:45 a.m. on the day of the absence. In the event that the school has not been notified of the student's absence, the school will make every attempt to locate the whereabouts of the student including utilizing the automated calling system to notify parents of a child's absence.

If you are out of town, please notify the school so that we have your number in case of emergency.

If a student arrives after 9:00 a.m. they will be marked as absent. If a student arrives after 1:00 p.m. for the afternoon they will be marked absent. Students leaving between 2:45 and 3:15 p.m. will be marked as "early checkout".

All absences and tardies shall be recorded on the student's report card. Students receiving 10 or more absences and/or tardies in a given quarter will be reported to the building principal. Elementary students with excessive absences may be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Behavior Expectations of Students

Students are expected to conduct themselves within the bounds set by the Board and the administrative regulations set forth by the Superintendent. Consideration for the rights and well-being of others, cooperation with all members of the school community and respect for oneself and others are the basic principles guiding student behavior.

The primary responsibility for student discipline within the school rests with the Principal. The primary responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within the classroom lies with the individual classroom teacher.

Corporal punishment shall not be used. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for students, staff, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or defense of property.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any student in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Disciplinary action may range from conferring with a teacher to expulsion from school. Continued infractions will have a cumulative effect in terms of disciplinary action.

A student is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct if the student engages in any inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to:

- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco or tobacco innovation products;
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages or alcohol innovations.
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling illegal drugs or controlled substances, marijuana, including medical marijuana, look-alike drugs, prescription drugs, and drug paraphernalia.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon in violation of the "Weapons" section of this handbook.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring any object that reasonably could be considered or used as a weapon.
- Disobeying directives from staff or disobeying rules governing student conduct.
- Using violence, force, coercion, intimidation or other comparable conduct toward anyone or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person's property.
- Cheat or act in the conduct of cheating. Cheat or cheating means a student acting dishonestly in carrying out any assignments. This may include, but is not limited to, copying assignments, using unauthorized crib sheets for tests, looking at someone else's test, plagiarizing, copying other's work from the Internet or building servers or permitting another person to perform the assignment.
- Plagiarize or submit the work of others and claim it as their own. Plagiarism is defined as any of the following; directly copying a paper or portion of a paper without proper attribution; turning in someone else's work as your own; or citing works that the student did not consult in the writing of the paper. Changing the wording of another document does not avoid the problem of plagiarism.
- Plagiarism includes ghost writing, including text generated by AI, and the use paper mills and text spinners. Plagiarism is as much about the theft of ideas as it is words.

- Engaging in any activity that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or any other disruptive activity.
- Unexcused absenteeism.
- Misconduct of any sort on any means of District transportation.
- Hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Forging any signature or making any false entry or attempting to authorize any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of a school.

These grounds stated above for disciplinary action apply whenever a student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities, including, but not limited to the circumstances set forth below:

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during, or after school hours or at any other time when school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity or event or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- Travel to and from school or a school activity, function, or event;
- Anywhere if conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, a threat to the safety and welfare of the student population, or conduct that detrimentally effects the climate or efficient operations of the school.

Behavior / Conduct Definitions

Assault: Hitting, striking and/or attempting to cause injury to another person; placing a person in reasonable apprehension of imminent physical injury.

Bullying: Repeated and systematic intimidation, harassment, and attacks on a student or multiple students, perpetrated by individuals or groups. Bullying includes but is not limited to: physical violence, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, threats, extortion or theft, damaging property, and exclusion from a peer group.

Disruptive Behavior: Any act that disrupts the student learning and/or teaching process.

Hazing: Any activity that a reasonable person believes would negatively impact the mental or physical health or safety of a student or put the student in a ridiculous, humiliating, stressful or disconcerting position for the purposes of initiation, affiliation, admission, membership or maintenance of membership in any group, class, organization, club or athletic team including, but not limited to, a grade level, student organization or school-sponsored activity. Hazing may occur even when all students involved are willing participants.

Bicycles

Students are allowed to ride bikes to school. Bikes must be in good working condition. Bikes must be placed in the racks and must be correctly chained/locked to the bike rack. Students are expected to wear helmets when riding bikes to school. If your child rides a bike to school, they should dismount and walk the bike once they are on school grounds.

Birthday / Party Invitations

Students may distribute invitations to birthday parties in school provided they are inviting their entire class. If a child wishes to only invite certain friends, families will need to find alternative ways to send

invitations to those friends outside of school. Per confidentiality requirement the school's main office and classroom teachers will not release parent contact information to those wishing to send invitations to select classmates.

Birthday / Party Treats

Children may bring birthday / party treats for their classmates, but the treats must be commercially prepared. Please visit with your child's classroom teacher to schedule the best time. Your child's teacher will be able to apprise you of any significant food allergies so that those foods can be avoided (e.g. nuts). Helena Public Schools encourages the promotion of a positive learning environment by providing healthy snacks for celebrations. Each celebration should include healthy foods and beverage choices, including water. Physical activity during celebrations is encouraged.

See also: Board Policy 2120 Wellness

Birthday / Party Latex Balloons

Because of the potential for serious latex-related allergic reactions, as well as the choking hazards associated with latex balloons, only non-latex balloons will be allowed in the school building or on school grounds.

Book Challenge

The Board of Trustees, although it is ultimately responsible for all instructional and library material, recognizes the right of students to free access to many different types of books and resources. The Board also recognizes the right of teachers, librarians and administrators to select books and other materials in accordance with the adopted curriculum, current trends in education, and student and staff needs, and to make them available in schools and libraries.

Therefore, books and other resources will be chosen for value of interest and enlightenment of all students in the school community. A book or other resource will not be excluded because of the race, nationality, political, or religious values of the writer or of the material's style and language. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present all points of view concerning the international, national, and local problems and issues of our times. Books and other resources of sound factual authority will not be proscribed or removed from library shelves or classrooms because of partisan doctrinal approval or disapproval.

Censorship of books and other materials will be challenged in order to maintain the school's responsibility to provide information and enlightenment. Accordingly, the Board will deal with censorship of books or other materials as follows:

- The final decision on controversial materials rests with the Board after the established process for handling challenged materials has been exhausted/completed.
- The Board recognizes the right of an individual parent or guardian to request that his or her child not have to read a given book or view a particular media work.
- Any parent or person of legal standing who wishes to request reconsideration of the use of any book or resource in the school must make such request in writing on forms provided through building principals or school librarians.

[Administrative Procedure for the enforcement of this policy (2067) may be obtained in the Central Administration building and each school office.]

See also Board Policy 2067 Handling Challenged or Questioned Material

Breakfast and Lunch Program

Breakfast and lunch at the Helena Schools will be served every day the first day of school.

The school breakfast and lunch prices for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows:

- Breakfast - Student - $2.00
- Lunch – Student - $3.00
- Milk - $0.60 per half pint
- Adult Breakfast - $3.50 per breakfast
- Adult Lunch - $5.00 per lunch

Elementary schools (K-5) will be running the **"Welcome to the Club House"** program. This program is designed to encourage students to try new things like fruits and vegetables. The program also encourages students to eat healthier with the 3-4 entree choices rotating daily. Salad bars will be back with a variety of fresh and canned fruits, vegetables and salad every day. This will allow students to be able to make their own healthy choices of what they want to try.

Every parent/guardian may have a **FREE** lunch and a **FREE** breakfast, with their child(ren) each month during the school year. The School Food Service Program wants to encourage parents to be a part of their student's meals so they can experience the variety of nutritious options available every day to students at school. This offer does not include special events and is not valid on special days like BBQ days or Open Houses.

The School Food Service Program will continue to offer "Pay On-Line Program" for your student's food service account needs. You can go to the web site, www.mymealtime.com. You will need to set up an account, with the user as yourself (not the student). You will need to know your child(ren)'s student ID number. You will be able to use a credit card to put money into your child's accounts. All additional processing fees still apply at the time of the deposit, and the process may take about 48 hours to get into your child(ren)s account in each school.

If you have more than one student enrolled, we want parents to know that we can build you a "Family Account" no matter which school your children might be attending within the Helena School District. This means that you can just put money onto one student and all of your students can pull from that same pool of money. You will also be able to see who is using it all on one report. This is not an automatic program you just need to send an email to the Food Service Director Rworthy@HelenaSchools.org, and he will build one specific to your needs. Nothing else will change other than the fact you only need to do one deposit instead of one for each student.

****Applications for free and reduced-priced lunches are available on the school district website** We recommend every family try to qualify through either the one line Free/Reduced meal form, or it is also acceptable to qualify your family through other programs: SNAP, FDPIR, Head Start, WIC, unemployment compensation or TANF or if you are a foster child, homeless, or runaway.**

Changes/Free & Reduced Meals

The District recognizes that students may forget or lose lunch money or may have an unpaid meal account balance. The District endeavors to treat all students with dignity regarding unpaid meal charges;

however, unpaid meal charges create a significant financial burden for the District. To ensure that students do not go hungry but also minimize the financial burden, the District shall charge meals and collect on meal account charges in all schools consistent with this policy. Students who are eligible to receive free meals do not have a meal account and, therefore, are not subject to this policy. Free lunch status students may pre-pay for or purchase a la carte items with cash or check. Students that had a negative balance before they are approved for FREE or REDUCED meals are still liable for any charges incurred before approval, even though they will be free going forward for this school year.

Parents may restrict their child's ability to charge by sending the school written notice either stating their child cannot charge or limiting the amount their child can charge. However, they will need to send a lunch with their child.

K-12 Students

Students will pay for meals at the full rate as established by the District in accordance with federal law. Eligible students will pay a reduced rate as established by the District in accordance with federal law. Meals must be pre-paid. Students will be permitted to charge a maximum of $30.00 once his or her meal account reaches zero. Once a student has charged the maximum number of meals, the student will no longer be permitted to charge and parents will initially be contacted directly by phone or in person by the building principal. The school will offer the student an emergency (regular) meal at the standard rate.

Payment of Meal Account

Each school shall maintain records regarding student meal balances. The District will send out notices bi-weekly using current email addresses to parents/guardians informing them of low or negative meal account balances.
Parents/guardians may also check a student meal account balance online at mymealtime.com.

Parents/guardians must submit payment for meal accounts with a credit card or debit card at mymealtime.com OR pay in person with a check or cash at their student's school. Payment must be submitted 30 days from date of notice of deficit balance. If the District has not received payment within 30 days the payment is considered overdue and is a delinquent debt.

See also Board Policy 7052 Meal Charges

School Meal Changes / Free and Reduced Lunch Applications

There will be a charge for all student meals unless the student qualifies for free or reduced meals.

If you need assistance paying for your child's meal costs, now is the time to apply for the Free and Reduced Lunch program. Visit https://helenaschools.org/departments/food-services/ to get started.

When you apply for meal assistance, you not only help your family, but you help your school receive more funding for important student services like textbooks and math and literacy programs.

If you're concerned about paying your child's meal costs, please apply. If you have questions, please contact your school office. By signing up, you feed your family and support your school.

Cancellation of School / Bus Delays or Cancellations

In case of severe weather or other emergencies, official information about school closings will be broadcast on the local radio stations. Information will also be posted on the district web site – http://www.helenaschools.org

If there are inclement weather delays or canceled bus routes, information will be announced on the following media outlets:

KXLH / KTVH / KFBB / KRTV
MTPR & YPR
KGR
Helena Independent Record
The HPS District website at: http://www.helenaschools.org for weather alert and bus delay/cancellation information.
HPS Transportation Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/HSD1Transportation/
Twitter: @HelenaPublic
Instagram: Helena Public Schools

Cell Phones, Smart Watches, Earbuds, Headphones of Any Type

Use of a cell phone of any type (including phone watches) in buildings or during class time will result in the phone or watch being confiscated and held in the office unless the phone or watch is being used as part of a teacher-directed educational & time-limited activity. Phones are to remain off from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. At no time should phones be used for text messaging or photographs. Students are not to loan their cell phones to others to use.

Students are not to wear earbuds or headphones of any type without permission from the teacher or principal.

Lost or damaged cell phones, phone watches, etc. are the responsibility of the student and his or her parent/guardian. The district is not responsible for loss or damage to cell phones of any type.

Change of Address (Including Email Address)

Please **immediately** inform the school of any change in address, work phone number, home phone number, email address or emergency phone numbers. Parents of 4th and 5th grade students may update their contract information by logging onto the PowerSchool parent portal and entering updated information.

Children of Military Families

It is the intention of the District to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families transitioning to and from school because of frequent moves and/ deployment of a parent on active duty in the regular Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves.

In the event that a child of a military family seeks to enroll in the District, the District shall enroll and appropriately place the student as quickly as possible based upon information in the unofficial educational records pending receipt of the official records.

The District shall not charge tuition in relation to a child of a military family transferring into the District who has been placed in the care of a noncustodial parent or other person through a special power of attorney so long as that noncustodial parent or other person resides within the District.

See also Board Policy 3022 Children of Military Families

Communication with Families

Communication between the home and school is an essential part of the elementary program. You are encouraged to contact your child's teacher, principal or any specialist if you have questions, concerns, or compliments about your child's progress in school.

There are a number of ways for parents to receive information about their child's progress and school.

- **Automated Notification System:** The District has implemented a notification system called School Messenger. The system will provide parents with instant communication regarding student attendance, general information notifications, and emergency notifications utilizing voice messages, email and text messaging.

- **Open House** is a time set aside each fall for parents to visit their child's school and meet their child's teachers. This is not a time for individual parent/ teacher conferences but rather a time to meet and greet the school staff and classmates for the coming year.

- **Report Cards** are issued following each twelve-week period. These reports are based on standards and will inform parents of their child's progress.

- **Parent / Teacher Conferences** provide opportunities for teachers to share information with parents about their child's progress in school. The parent / teacher conference is an important means of reporting to parents and guardians. These conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring of the year. Additional conferences may be held at the request of the parent or teacher anytime during the year. Some teachers conduct Student- Led Parent / Teacher Conferences.

- **Email / Telephone** contact is encouraged. All teachers now have classrooms telephones. Messages can be left during the day. Parents are encouraged to utilize email as well. Please contact your child's teacher and/or principal for their email address and/or phone number.

- **Newsletters** from the principal are sent home with students on a regular basis to provide timely information about school, classroom and district activities. Some school principals email newsletters to parents wishing to receive email rather than paper copies.

- **Parent Council Groups** (also PTA / PTO / PSTA) are established in each school to provide valuable support and service to students and staff. Parents are encouraged to become active members.

- **School District Web Site** at http://helenaschools.org provides general information about the District and its programs as well as current news items. Each individual school has a section on the district web site that has information pertaining to that school.

- **Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council** meets monthly at the Lincoln Center. Membership is comprised of a parent representative from each school. If you are interested in participating please notify your child's building principal.

- **Assessment Results** provide parents with an academic indicator of how their child is progressing in school. As part of their learning, students participate in a variety of classroom assessments throughout the school year. In addition to these classroom assessments, students participate in district level assessments that drive instructional decisions.

Students in grades K-1 take the Acadience reading assessment to determine reading abilities.
Students in grades 1-5 take the iReady district benchmark three times a year to determine if they are on track for grade level reading and math. The purpose of these assessments is to use the results to inform

instruction to meet the learning needs of the students.

Students in grade two will participate in the CogAT ability test in the spring of the school year. These results provide baseline information on the cognitive ability of students as well as being one of a variety of criteria to determine placement in the district's gifted and talented program.

Students in grades 3-5 will participate in a state assessment throughout the year called the MAST which measures students' proficiency on grade level standards in Math and English Language Arts. Fifth grade students also take the Montana Science Assessment. These standardized test results provide teachers, principals, and District administration with data to determine the effectiveness of instructional programs.

Crosswalks and Sidewalks

Students learn by example. Please use the crosswalks and sidewalks when you come to school. Adults may save a minute when they jay walk, however, this is a dangerous example for students.

Emergency/Safety Drills

The Board recognizes that safety and health standards should be incorporated into all aspects of the operation of the District. Rules for safety and prevention of accidents will be posted in compliance with Montana Safety Culture Act and the Montana Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Each of the schools in the Helena School District has developed an emergency plan to help ensure the safety of children in the event of a fire or other disaster, such as an earthquake or a building intruder.

There will be at least eight (8) disaster drills a year. All teachers will discuss disaster drill procedures with their class at the beginning of each year and will have them posted in a conspicuous place next to the exit door. A record will be kept of all fire drills. The drills will be held at different hours of the day or evening to avoid distinction between drills and actual disasters.

In the event of actual emergency, up-to-date information may be obtained at the District web site: http://www.helenaschools.org or by tuning in or following the various information sites below:

- KXLH / KTVH / KFBB / KRTV
- MTPR & YPR
- KGR Radio
- Helena Independent Record
- The HPS District website at: http://www.helenaschools.org for weather alert and bus delay/cancellation information.
- HPS Transportation Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/HSD1Transportation/
- Twitter: @HelenaPublic
- Instagram: Helena Public Schools

In compliance with state regulations, fire drills will be held throughout the school year. Specific instructions for the fire drill exits are posted in each room. An annual earthquake drill takes place in October of each school year.

See also: Board Policy 7060 School Safety

Emergency Information

In case of an emergency, each student is required to have on file at the school office the following

information:

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) name(s).
- Complete and up-to-date address information.
- Home phone number and parent work phone numbers.
- Emergency phone numbers of friends or relatives.
- Physician's name and phone number.

No pupil will be enrolled in kindergarten whose 5th birthday does not occur on or before September 10 of the school year in which the child registers to enter school. A kindergarten program that is designated as a full-time program must allow a parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the enrollment of a child in school, as provided in MCA 20-5-102, to enroll the child half-time.

Students enrolling for the first time at any Helena public school must present a **birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age within 40 days**. Additionally, enrolling students must present proof of residence and immunization records. (Note: ** Montana State law requires all students to be immunized against Diphtheria, Pertussis (whooping cough), Tetanus, Polio, Measles, and Mumps & Rubella (MMR). Exceptions are allowed for verified religious and medical reasons only.) Proof of immunizations must be provided on or before the first day of school.

Students transferring to the Helena School District will be admitted and placed pursuant to the terms of Board policy. The District will enroll the student and will request the student's records from the previous school district. A final decision regarding grade placement will not be final until records from the previous school are received.

Family Night

The Helena Board of Trustees has designated each Wednesday evening during the school year as Family Night.

The purpose of this evening is to allow students the opportunity to participate in family or community-based youth activities without scheduled conflicts from schools. In order to promote the concept school-sponsored activities are not scheduled on Wednesday night. There may be occasional exceptions due to MHSA scheduling conflicts.

Field Trips

Your child's class will be participating in educational field trips during the year. It is the policy of Helena School District #1 to acquire parental permission before allowing a student to travel with members of his/her class. ***If you would like your child to participate, please carefully read and sign the "Parent Permission form" available at the back of this handbook or online.***

By signing and checking the yes or no on page 59 you are giving permission for your child to go with his/her class on field trips during the year. Transportation will be provided by the district. If travel by a private car is required for an event, you will be notified prior to the trip.

As a parent or guardian, your signature on the permission form on page 53 indicates that you understand that the school and the staff will do everything possible to prevent any accidents. However, by checking and signing you indicate that you understand that some activities on field trips involve inherent risks to students, regardless of all feasible safety measures that may be taken by the district. In consideration of

the district's agreement to allow your child to participate in field trips you agree to accept responsibility for any loss, damage, or injury to your child that occurs during your child's participation in a field trip that is not the result of fraud, willful injury to a person or property or the willful or negligent violation of a law by a trustee, employee or agent of the Helena School District#1.

In the event it becomes necessary for the district staff in charge to obtain emergency care for your child, neither he/she or the school district assumes financial liability for the expenses incurred because of an accident, injury, illness and/or unforeseen circumstance.

If your child has a medical condition, which the school should be aware of before allowing your child to participate on a field trip, you must notify the school and inform them of the nature of the medical condition.

In the event that unforeseen circumstances arise creating a need for you to contact your student or to have information relayed to you about an emergency, change in itinerary, etc. an information network has been established. You will be provided with a contact person and number prior to the field trip.

Parents who wish to assist in chaperoning a field trip may volunteer by contacting the teacher of the class or the building principal. Due to a variety of factors (e.g. participant restrictions at field trip sites, space, etc.) additional family members or friends may not accompany a volunteer chaperone on field trips. All children participating in field trips must ride district provided transportation to and from the field trip site. Exceptions can be made by the building administrator 24 hours in advance. Exceptions can be made by the building admin 24 hours in advance.

First Aid

There are facilities in each school for a student to rest if he/she is not feeling well. If your child does not feel well enough to return to class in a short time, you will be contacted to pick up your child from school. It is important that the school is kept informed of your current local phone numbers and where you can be contacted.

Procedures for administering first aid within the school system have been formulated by the district's School Nurses. Very minor injuries will be taken care of by trained school personnel or by the School Nurse. Parents will be contacted and requested to take over the responsibility for any care that goes beyond "first aid." It is imperative that the school has emergency phone numbers in case the parent cannot be reached.

Foster Care

Children in foster care are entitled to educational stability and the opportunity to achieve at the same high levels as their peers. "Foster care" means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.

The District shall enroll a child in foster care in a school determined to be in the child's best interest without delay regardless of whether that student can produce records normally required for enrollment. The new school in which a child in foster care is enrolled shall immediately contact the school of origin to obtain the child's records.

See also Policy 3023 Education of Children in Foster Care

GPS and Audio Child Tracking / Monitoring Systems

Parents and students are expressly prohibited from using covert means to listen-in or make a recording (audio or video) of any meeting or activity at school. This includes placing recording devices, or other devices with one- or two-way audio communication technology (i.e., technology that allows a person off-site to listen to live conversations and sounds taking place in the location where the device is located), within a student's book bag/backpack, on the student's person or otherwise in an area capable of listening in or recording without express written consent of the Superintendent.

Health Services

Communicable Diseases

The School Nurse assists school staff and families in the management of communicable disease. This is accomplished through classroom education including proper hand washing and respiratory hygiene, newsletter and in-service communications on health updates, and through the management of disease outbreaks in conjunction with local health department staff.

Per MCA 20-5-405 To protect children from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school nurse or principal. Examples of diseases include Mumps, Measles, Chicken Pox (Varicella), Influenza, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Coronavirus Disease (Covid)

For more information on MCA 20-5-405, please visit https://www.leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0200/chapter_0050/part_0040/section_0050/0200-0050-0040-0050.html

A team of registered, professional school nurses travel between schools as assigned. They are available to students, families and staff for questions, concerns, and information regarding health and safety in the school setting.

The Helena Public Schools Nurses request updated health information annually or anytime there are changes throughout the school year. A link to health forms and the school nurse contact information can be found here.

Students who have health concerns during the day should tell their teacher(s) who may refer them to the school nurse/health office.

Illness Protocol

When a student becomes ill but does not require immediate medical help, a determination will be made about whether the student should be sent home (ie. should be temporarily excluded from school). The School Nurse or designated staff member will determine whether the student's illness meets one of the following criteria:

1. Prevents the student from participating comfortably in activities as determined by staff members of the school.
2. Results in a need for care that is greater than staff members can provide without compromising the health and safety of other students. This may include psychological or physical issues affecting academic performance.

3. Poses a risk of spreading disease to others based on the list of specific excludable conditions.
4. Temperature 100.4 or higher
5. Uncontrolled cough or difficulty breathing
6. Vomiting and/or repeated diarrhea
7. Severe headache, especially with fever
8. Red eyes with discolored discharge, and/or pain, and/or itchiness
9. Discolored nasal discharge, especially with fever
10. Severe ear pain
11. Rash accompanied by fever, drainage or blistering
12. Sore throat accompanied by fever, rash or difficulty swallowing

For a complete description of the Helena Public School Illness Protocol, please visit: https://helenaschools.org/illness-protocol/

Immunizations

Vaccines Required for School Attendance, Preschool -12th Grade

VACCINE	PRESCHOOL[1]	KINDERGARTEN - 12TH GRADE
Haemophilus influenza Type B (Hib)	**1 dose** (given on or after the 1st birthday, unless child is older than 59 months)[2]	None Needed
Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, Tdap)	**4 doses**	**4 doses** (one dose must be given on or after 4th birthday)[3,4] **Plus** **1 dose of Tdap** (prior to entering 7th grade)[6]
Polio (IPV or OPV)	**3 doses**	**3 doses** (one dose must be given on or after 4th birthday)[3]
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)	**1 dose** (dose must be given on or after 1st birthday)	**2 doses** (first dose must be given on or after 1st birthday, and spacing between doses is 4 weeks)
Varicella "chickenpox" (Var)	**1 dose** (dose must be given on or after 1st birthday)[6]	**2 doses** (first dose must be given on or after 1st birthday, spacing between doses is 12 weeks for children under 13 years, and 4 weeks for those older than 13 years)[5,6]

[1]Per MCA 20-5-402, a preschool is defined as a facility that provides, on a regular basis and as its primary purpose, educational instruction designed for children 5 years of age or younger and that: (a) serves no child under 5 years of age for more than 3 hours a day; and (b) serves no child 5 years of age for more than 6 hours a day.

[2]Hib vaccine is not recommended for children older than 59 months.

[3]When following the ACIP schedule, children will have at least 5 doses of DTaP and 4 doses of polio vaccine.

[4]A pupil 7 years or older who has not completed the DTaP requirement must receive additional doses of Tdap vaccine or Td vaccine to become current in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) recommendations per ARM 37.114.705.

[5]While it is not recommended, if a child younger than 13 years receives their second dose of varicella at an interval of 4 weeks or longer, the dose does **not** need to be repeated.

[6]As of October 1, 2015 pupils are required to have varicella vaccine and all pupils 7th-12th grade must have a Tdap vaccine.

Note: A four-day grace period may apply, as appropriate, per the ACIP recommendations.

Documentation of a valid medical or religious exemption or conditional enrollment may be submitted in lieu of receiving all required vaccines.

Proof of school required vaccinations or exemptions must be provided before:

- Kindergarten entry
- 7th grade entry (Tdap booster given after the age of 10)

For more information regarding Montana required vaccines for school entry and exemptions allowed, please visit: https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0200/chapter_0050/part_0040/section_0030/0200-0050-0040-0030.html

Immunization Exemptions

Per Montana Code Annotated, parents can file in writing for either a Medical exemption or a Religious exemption. A Medical Exemption is appropriate if a student's health care provider and parent agree that a required vaccination is not appropriate, based on the student's health. A Religious Exemption is

appropriate if a vaccine is contrary to the family's religious beliefs. Links for both exemptions can be found below:

Medical Exemption HES101A

Religious Exemption HES113

For more information on the immunization exemptions allowed by Montana law, please visit : https://helenaschools.org/departments/school-nurse-health-services/

Medication Procedures

In special cases the school nurse, healthcare provider and parents may agree on a plan for administration of medication during school hours. The parent/guardian will bring the pharmacy labeled bottle of medication to school for intake including signature and counting of pills.
Medication administration by family may be needed up to 24 hours after medication intake allowing time for a district school nurse to process the new medication.

Over-the-Counter Medications (OTC)

• Pre K- 8th grade: A licensed health care provider must provide a written order for administration of OTC medication, parent authorization given, and medication provided in original container. Allow up to 24 hours before administration begins for school nurse processing.
• 9th grade -12th grade: may keep a small quantity of non-prescribed, parent recommended OTC medication with them and may self-administer, according to package directions. Parents who want the school to manage OTC medication for their high school student must complete an Authorization for Medication to be Given at School form and provide the medication.

Self-Administration of Emergency Medications

•Students with permission by their health care provider and guardian who have provided the permission form to the school and who have asthma, severe allergies or anaphylaxis may possess and self-administer emergency medication; epinephrine auto-injector (epi-pen), epinephrine nasal spray, oral antihistamine, or asthma inhaler during the school day, during field trips, during school-sponsored events, or while on a school bus.

For more information on medication procedures, please visit: https://helenaschools.org/medication-procedures/

Allergies

The Helena School District makes every effort to decrease exposure to allergens, however we encourage parents of children with life threatening allergies to contact the School Nurse prior to the beginning of the school year to work together to develop an Allergy Action Plan. In case of suspected anaphylactic reaction, trained staff may administer stock emergency injectable epinephrine to any student in need thereof on school grounds, in a school building, or at a school function according to a standing order of a chief medical officer for administration of emergency medications.

Head Lice

Head lice are wingless insects about the size of a sesame seed. They cannot fly, jump, or swim. They are passed from person to person from direct head to head contact or, very rarely, by "hitching a ride" on a comb, brush or hat. While they are an anxiety-producing nuisance they do not carry disease. Students

with head lice or nits (louse eggs) will not be excluded from school as unnecessary absences directly affect school performance and a child's opportunity to learn.

If a parent or staff member believes a student has lice, they can contact the School Nurse who will arrange a time to assess the student privately. If live lice or nits are found the student's parents will be contacted with information about effective treatment options. The student may remain at school until the end of the day.

Classroom wide screenings will not be done as studies indicate that it does not decrease the incidence of head lice, is disruptive to the learning process, and a violation of privacy and confidentiality of the student and their family.

Helena Public Schools nurses educate students regarding lice and how to avoid transmission by decreasing head-to-head contact and not sharing hats, combs, brushes or hair accessories. Parents can help by routinely inspecting their child's hair for lice. If you are unsure of this process, how to identify a louse, or how to treat an infestation please contact your School Nurse.
For a step-by-step guide for managing head lice at home, refer to: https://identify.us.com/idmybug/head-lice/head-lice-documents/lice-mgmnt-chart-home.pdf

Health Screenings

Methods for screening may include checklists, observations, and formal instruments as indicated. Parents are notified of any unusual performance or failed screening. Students may be referred for further evaluation by a health care provider.

Vision – School Nurses may screen students in grades K, 1, 3, 5, 8, and students new to Helena School District without screening documentation, students who are referred, and students who are being monitored.

Oral Health – Students in grades 1 and 3 may be screened by local dentists and dental health professionals who volunteer to provide a visual inspection. The School Nurse coordinates the program in each elementary school.

Hearing- School Nurses and School Speech/Language Pathologists may screen students for hearing in K, 1st and 9th grade. Students in other grades may be screened upon referral, if they are without screening documentation, and students who are being monitored. The regional Audiologist may consult with the school nurses regarding referrals and ongoing management.

5th Grade Growth and Development Lesson

The Helena Public Schools Nurses partner with school staff to teach a Growth and Development lesson at the 5th grade level. The lesson focuses on the changes that come with puberty. Please contact your school nurse for questions or concerns related to classroom instruction materials or environment. Instruction materials will be made available to review prior to the lessons. Per MCA **20-7-120,** there will be parental or guardian notification no less than 48 hours prior to holding an event or assembly or introducing materials for instructional use.

Topics taught in the lesson for girls are limited to:

- When to expect puberty to begin
- The physical and emotional changes that come with puberty
- The maturation of the female reproductive system

- Menstruation
- The importance of good hygiene, healthy habits, and sleep
- The benefits of maintaining health through good nutrition and exercise

Topics taught in the lesson for boys are limited to:

- When to expect puberty to begin
- The physical and emotional changes that come with puberty
- The maturation of the male reproductive system
- Common experiences of puberty, including voice changes, feelings of physical awkwardness, and nocturnal emissions
- The importance of good hygiene, healthy habits, and sleep
  The benefits of maintaining health through good nutrition and exercise

The school will notify parents or guardians of the right to opt a student out of a mental health screening. Further parents or guardians will be notified of any issues or concerns resulting from a mental health screening they agreed to allow.

Homeless Students

In accordance with federal and state law and regulations, the District will provide homeless students with access to the instructional programming that supports achievement and other services for which they are eligible. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall they be stigmatized in any way.

The District will determine, according to the best interest of the child whether the child will be enrolled in the school of origin or in the public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining the best interest of the child the District will, to the extent feasible, keep the child in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent.

If the child is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless liaison will assist in placement and enrollment decisions, with the views of the child taken into consideration.

The District shall immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child into the selected school even if the parent/child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, evidence of residency, or other documentation.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services available to other students in the school system including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students with limited English proficiency; vocational and technical programs; preschool programs; before and after school-care programs; and school meals/nutrition programs.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled.

See: Board Policy 3020 Education of Homeless Youth

Lost and Found

Each school has a lost and found area. Throughout the year a large amount of hats, coats and gloves are often accumulated. If your child has lost an article of clothing, please ask him/her to check the lost and found area in the school office or to speak with his/her teacher. Lost and found items, which are not picked up, will be periodically donated to local charities. **Please remember write your child's name in their belongings so items that are left/lost can be returned to your child.**

Montana Department of Justice Violent & Sexual Offenders Registry

The Montana Department of Justice maintains a Sexual or Violent Offenders Registry that can be reviewed online at https://dojmt.gov/sexual-or-violent-offender-registry/ . This website provides the last known residences for these individuals and supplemental information regarding the nature and dates of the crime(s) that caused them to be listed in this registry.

While the district does not track or monitor the individuals that may reside in the vicinity of schools or bus stops, it is our intent to make you aware that this registry information is available to the public. The Montana Department of Justice also provides on-line guidance and educational materials for both Parents and Educators on their website and we encourage parents and guardians to review this information and familiarize themselves with the resources that are available to help address these situations.

Out of District Student Attendance Procedures

Parents or guardians of any student who is seeking to enroll in the Helena Public Schools and who currently resides outside of the Helena Public Schools attendance area and/or is attending school in another District must complete a ***K-12 Student Out-of-District Transfer Request*** form. The form is available from all schools and the Assistant Superintendent's Office at the Lincoln Center and can also be found at the following link: K-12 Student Out-of-District Transfer Request.

The 2023 legislative session changed the law regarding out-of-district enrollment. We welcome students who reside outside of the Helena Public Schools attendance area, but families in addition to the ***K-12 Student Out-of-District Transfer Request*** form are now required to submit an ***Montana Out-of-District Attendance Agreement (FP-14.1)*** each year. The form is linked here for your convenience. Please complete, sign and return the form to your child(ren)'s school the first week of school or mail to the address noted below. If your address has changed, please notify your school as well.

Mail forms to:

Assistant Superintendent
ATTN: Enrollment
1325 Poplar Street
Helena, MT. 59601

Upon receipt of the form and the requested records the Assistant Superintendent or designee will review the student's attendance, academic standing, behavior, etc. and approve or deny the request based upon the student's standing. Students who are not in good standing with their current district may not be accepted.

Boundary lines set by the Board of Trustees shall be observed unless an exception is granted through guidelines established by the Superintendent.

Approved transfer requests carry the following conditions:

1. The parent/guardian must provide transportation to and from school.
2. The District will determine the placement of any out-of-district student accepted for enrollment.
3. Out-of-District transfers will be subject to review each year in order to ensure that all students and policies are being met.
4. The District reserves the right to have students return to the school of residence if overcrowding results in the receiving school or there is need to balance enrollments.
5. The student who transfers is subject to the eligibility policies established by the Montana High School Association (grades 9-12 only).
6. A student requesting a transfer from outside the Helena School District must be in good standing in their current school. The criteria include, academic standing, behavior, attendance, etc.
7. Tuition fees will be applied based on Board Policy.

Outdoor Recess

Outdoor recess is an important part of the elementary student's day. The much needed fresh air adds to student success in the classroom. Students need to dress appropriately for outdoor recess. During the winter months students should bring gloves or mittens, hats, snow boots and layered clothing in addition to a warm, winter coat. Students will go outside for recess when the temperature is above zero. Students will also go outside in light rain and/or snow and should be dressed for this type of weather. Schools do not send students outdoors in extreme temperatures, such as below-zero weather with the wind-chill factor taken into account. Also, if the county informs schools of "poor air quality," this factor is considered in regard to outside activities.

If a student is ill, home is the best place for him/her to be. We realize that, from time to time, students are not sick enough to stay home, but are too sick to go outdoors.

Unfortunately, we are not equipped or staffed to supervise students indoors at recess time. Because of this, we ask that, if a student is to be kept in at recess because of illness, parents should send a note each day the request is in effect up to a total of three consecutive days. If after three days the parent still requests that the student stay in, the parent should provide a written statement from a physician stating the reason the child should be excluded from outdoor activities.

Parent Portal: Automated Notification System Opt Out

The Federal Communications Commission requires the Helena School District to allow you to opt out of receiving outreach messages to you via our automated system, BrightArrow. Outreach messages can include information about schedule changes, school events, parent reminders, cancelled activities, and

other non-emergency messages. The District wants to keep you informed in multiple ways. Our system allows us to send messages to you through different mediums – phone calls, texts, emails – regarding important school information. If you do not want to receive non-emergency messages from BrightArrow please copy and complete the form below and return it to your school office. You will continue to receive emergency calls even if you do not consent. You can also revoke your consent to receive messages from our system at any time by contacting your child's school office.

Automated System Notifications Opt Out Form

Student Name: _____

Student's School: _____

Parent / Guardian Name: _____
(Please print)

Date: _____

I do not give the District and my child's school consent to send me automated outreach messages through the District's notification system.

I understand emergency messages are excluded from this opt out request.

Please copy this form, complete it, and return it to your child's school if you do NOT wish to receive automated information messages.

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Parent Rights

All fundamental parental rights are exclusively reserved to the parent of a child without obstruction or interference by a government entity in accordance with state and federal law (including without limitation to statutes and the common law) and District policy.

Parent Rights: Surveys

Parents have the right to inspect any survey or evaluation and refuse to allow their child to participate in such survey or evaluation that does not require the collection of personally identifiable information and is not necessary and essential for establishing the student's education record or validating an achievement test for admission to a postsecondary institution. Parents have the right to opt their student in to a survey or data collection that requires the collection of personally identifiable information and is not necessary and essential for establishing the student's education record or validating an achievement test for admission to a postsecondary institution.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are encouraged to take an active part in their child's school. Volunteers work as tutors, mentors, special event organizers, Parent council members, guest speakers, classroom assistants, playground monitors, and much more! Whatever your talents, whatever your interests, your school welcomes your time and support. If you are interested in volunteering you can contact your school

principal or fill out the Volunteer Registration Form available either in this handbook or online at http://helenaschools.org. A Volunteer Application Form is included in this handbook. If you are interested in volunteering, please complete the form and return it to your child's school. Volunteers who will be working with students and who aren't under the direct supervision of a District employee must undergo a background check. Background checks are conducted by the Human Resources Department. Note: During the 2025-2026 school year volunteers & visitors may be notified of restrictions to building access due to high/significant COVID transmission rates in Lewis & Clark County.

Participation in Club or Activity

The passage of a law in the 2023 Legislative session requires that parents/guardians must provide **written** permission for a student to participate in a school club or activity.

In the event that your school offers student clubs, activities, events, and programs for students your school will send a permission form that will need to be completed and signed before your child can participate.

Playground Safety

All Helena Public Elementary Schools want to provide a safe playground experience for all students. To do so playgrounds are supervised by school staff during recesses and before and after school.

Commonly understood and implemented rules are essential to helping make sure everyone is safe. Custodians are trained to recognize and reduce equipment and surface hazards. Principals, teachers and paraprofessionals are knowledgeable about appropriate activities for the available school playground space and equipment.

Please review the safety rules below with your child. Playground equipment varies by school, but the general safety rules below apply to all playground activities.

General School Playground Safety Rules

1. Always play safe by being careful and showing kindness and respect for others.
2. Never run around or push and pull others while near playground equipment. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
3. Don't go too close to the front or rear of moving equipment like swings; instead, walk out around moving equipment.
4. Wear proper clothing. Make sure your shoes are tied and wear clothes that can't get tangled up in playground equipment.
5. When you get off equipment make sure there isn't anyone in the way. If you jump, always bend your knees slightly and land on two feet.
6. Be careful when playing on equipment that may be wet. If it is a very warm day make sure the playground equipment is not too hot to use – like the slide.
7. Take turns and get in a line when more than one person wants to use a piece of equipment. When you share everyone gets a turn.
8. No holding places or cutting in line.
9. Sit properly on equipment and do not overcrowd. If a piece of equipment has a handrail, make sure you hold it at all times.
10. Be sure to ask a playground paraeducator for help if there is a problem or someone is hurt.
11. Listen to and respect the teachers on duty. Follow their directions the first-time directions are given.
12. Leave extra clothes and items you don't need in a designated spot away from the playground equipment.

13. Always make sure the adult on the playground knows if you are going inside before the bell rings.
14. After the bell rings, if you are on the school playground, pick up your belongings and any small equipment you were using.
15. Line up and walk inside the school quietly after you receive directions from the teachers on duty.
16. Leave snow on the ground.

Slides

1. Keep your shoes tied and don't wear any loose strings or clothing on the slide.
2. Be patient and wait your turn in line before getting on the slide ladder.
3. Take one step at a time and hold the handrails with both hands when climbing the ladder to the top of the slide. Never climb or run up the slide surface or the frame.
4. Slide down feet first and sitting up, never head first or on your back, knees or stomach. Go down one at a time with no fancy tricks.
5. Check the bottom of the slide to see if it is clear before sliding down. When you reach the bottom, get off and move away from the end of the slide.
6. On hot days, feel the slide with your hand before climbing to the top. If the side is too warm, don't play on it.

Swings

1. Always sit in the center of the swing; don't stand or kneel. Hold the chains tightly with both hands. Stop the swing completely before getting off.
2. No jumping out of swings, no twisting chains or swinging sideways. Do not swing empty seats!
3. Never double up with two kids to a swing or try to swing too high.
4. Don't push other children on swings. If you cannot start swinging, ask an adult to push you softly to get you started.
5. Stay a safe distance from other children on swings being careful not to run or walk in front, in back or between them. Walk out around instead.

Climbing Equipment

1. Hands stay well behind the person in front of you and beware of swinging feet. Never reach for bars or ropes that are too far away.
2. When you drop from the bars or ropes make sure you have enough room to not hit the equipment and hurt yourself. Bend your knees, land on both feet and don't touch others.
3. Don't overcrowd the equipment. Everyone starts from one side and moves in the same direction. When climbing down watch out for those climbing up.
4. Always stay in line, take turns, and never push or try to touch others.

Small Equipment – (balls, skipping ropes, hoops, etc.)

1. Use this equipment in a designated space away from the large equipment.
2. Be careful using this equipment so that you don't interfere with others. Be sure to stay in the designated play space.
3. When you share a ball with others, be sure to take turns and play safely. No rough play allowed!
4. If you are using a ball and it goes outside the play area, ask an adult (teacher) for permission to get it.

Policy Dealing with School Overcrowding

District Placement Grades K- 5

The district will strive to equalize classroom enrollments based on the state standards established by the Office of Public Instruction and the guidelines established by the Helena Board of Trustees. When a parent seeks to enroll a child in a grade level that has reached maximum enrollment allowed under state/district guidelines at any east side elementary school (Bryant, Central, Jefferson, Smith, Warren), the district will determine the placement of the student in a different east side elementary school based on space availability. Transportation will be provided for students to the new school of attendance when they are eligible according to district policy.

When a parent seeks to enroll a child in a grade level that has reached maximum enrollment allowed under state/district guidelines at any west side elementary school (Jim Darcy, Four Georgians, Rossiter, Broadwater, Hawthorne, Kessler), the district will determine the placement of the student either on the west side or east side depending on space availability. Transportation will be provided for students to the new school of attendance when they are eligible according to district policy.

Remember, in the event that the grade level you are seeking to enroll your child in is at maximum capacity the District will locate a classroom in another school that has capacity and will provide transportation.

Parent Choice Grades K- 5

The district will allow parents living within the east side elementary attendance area to request enrollment of their child in any of the east side elementary schools, depending on space availability based on state/district standards. Transportation of the student is not the district's responsibility.

The district will allow parents living within the west side elementary attendance area to request enrollment of their child in any of the east or west side elementary schools, depending on space availability based on state/district standards. Transportation of the student is not the district's responsibility.

Out-of-District Parent Choice Grades K- 5

The placement of out-of-district K-5 students who enroll in the Helena Public Schools will be made to east side elementary schools, depending on space availability based on state/district standards. Transportation of the student is not the district's responsibility.

Students attending a school on either an in-district or out-of-district Parent Choice request must adhere to all school rules and attendance requirements. The District reserves the right to have students return to the school of residence if school rules and attendance requirements are not met.

District Programs Grades K-5

Parents, who enroll a child in a district program which is not provided at all elementary schools, will be permitted to enroll any siblings in that school. Transportation will be provided to students who attend district programs when they are eligible according to district policy.

Students in district programs will be allowed to enroll in the middle and high school of their choice.

Public Health Emergency

In the event of a declared public health emergency as determined by the Board of Trustees or a public

health service the Board authorizes the Superintendent to take appropriate action to protect the health and safety of all students, staff, and visitors to include but not limited to closure of school buildings, implementation of infection control measures, and other appropriate safety actions.
The Superintendent will communicate with parents, citizens, and other stakeholders about the actions to be implemented per this policy.

See also Board Policy 7061 Public Health Emergency

Recording Meetings – NOT Allowed
For the security and integrity of our school community's communications, recording meetings with school staff is not permitted. This procedure has been implemented to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information exchanged during these discussions and meetings.

The ability to modify or manipulate recorded content raises concerns about the potential misrepresentation of conversations. By not allowing the recording of meetings, our goal is to maintain a transparent and reliable platform for communication among all participants.

The importance of clear and open communication between school staff and stakeholders is very important. If a participant has concerns about retaining accurate information from a meeting the individual is encouraged to take notes or request written summaries from the appropriate staff member.

Release of Students from School
A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures. Students will be released, with a parental request in writing, for the purpose of receiving religious instruction. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the office or school nurse. The administrator or nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent. When in doubt as to custodial rights, the District will rely on the most recent information available in the student's records. A student will only be released with prior written permission from the custodial parent to a previously unauthorized adult unless an emergency situation justifies a waiver.

Religious Practices
Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. Students may also pray in groups and discuss their religious views with other students as long as they are not disruptive or coercive. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. Student prayer, even if nonsectarian or non-proselytizing, will not be broadcast over the school public address system.

Students may study religions ancillary to the studies of human history and development and various national, cultural, and ethnic groups. This study will give neither preferential nor derogatory treatment to any religion or religious belief. The inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writings during instruction or in school programs or performances may occur where the religious content has a historical and/or independent educational purpose consistent with the approved curriculum. A student may read the Bible or other religious material during free reading time or when self-selected and consistent with a classroom or course requirements.

See Also Board Policy 2103 Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

Saturday School

In emergencies, including during reasonable efforts of the trustees to make up aggregate hours of instruction lost during a declaration of emergency by the trustees under Section 20-9-806, MCA, pupil instruction may be conducted on a Saturday when it is approved by the trustees.

Pupil instruction may be held on a Saturday at the discretion of a school district for the purpose of providing additional pupil instruction beyond the minimum aggregate hours of instruction required in Section 20-1-301, MCA, provided student attendance is voluntary.

See also Board Policy 2005 School Year – Calendar- and- Day

School Age Child Care Program Information (SACC)

SACC Information for Parents

The School-Age Child Care Program is available for elementary school-age children (grades K-5) who are currently enrolled as students in the Helena School District.

Schedule 2025-2026

The School Age Child Care Program will serve children during scheduled school days and most major breaks and holidays. Separate registration and prepayments are required for out of school time. For general information, contact Kirstan 324-1260 or kroush@helenaschools.org. For registration and billing questions, contact Jamie at 324-2119 or jmerrill@helenaschools.org.
Please see the SACC page of the district website and the digital SACC Family Handbook for more detailed information. http://www.helenaschools.org/departments/school-age-child-care

Payments may be paid at www.myprocare.com or mailed to:
Helena School District #1/SACC Program
1325 Poplar St.
Helena, MT 59601

Do not send payments to the school site

2025 – 2026 SACC Fees are updated on the SACC page of the District website.

The SACC Program is a licensed program and accepts the Best Beginnings scholarship. For families who believe they may qualify for a scholarship, contact Child Care Connections (CCC) at (406) 587-7786 and start an application. CCC will determine eligibility and will determine financial assistance for their funding. The parent is responsible for the full amount of the bill until all paperwork is completed and coverage has been approved by CCC. Scholarship families are required to report change of sites for full days to their case worker or risk being billed the daily rate.

School Bus Transportation/District Bus Services

Helena Public Schools has elected to provide student transportation services as allowed by the Montana Codes Annotated (MCA 20-10-121). The District's Transportation Department strives to provide safe, reliable and professional transportation services to its students. The primary mode of transportation offered is on school busses that are operated by First Student, a private vendor under a contract managed by the District's Transportation Department. This section of the Student Handbook is designed to provide an overview and reference information for the bus services offered. For information regarding bus behavior conduct guidelines and consequences please refer to the section of the handbook entitled

"Student Responsibility and Codes of Conduct – Section 9.0". Do not hesitate to contact the District's Transportation Department if you have questions or require additional information. Our contact information is:

Transportation Department/Helena Public Schools
3020 Big Sky Loop Helena, Montana 59602
Phone: 324-2100
Email: transportation@helenaschools.org
Web Site: https://helenaschools.org/departments/transportation/

Busing Eligibility

A student is eligible for district-provided transportation if they*:

- Resides in an attendance area and the student's residence is greater than 3 miles from the school for high school students or outside the established walk zone for K-8 students as defined for each individual school's attendance area. Bussing eligibility walk zone information may be reviewed on the district's website (https://helenaschools.org/departments/transportation/)
- Resides in the school's area of attendance and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP – Special Needs) that includes transportation as a related service in the IEP.

A student is ineligible for district-provided transportation is they*:

1. Lives less than 3 miles from the school of attendance for high school students or within a K-8 walk zone.
2. Resides in a District that does not have an applicable transportation agreement with the Helena Public Schools.
3. Resides beyond his/her school's attendance boundary as the result of a Parent Choice Boundary Exception, regardless of mileage to the school of attendance.
4. Has been temporarily placed in a District program less than 15 days.
5. Loses riding privileges for discipline reasons.

As defined by MCA 20-10-101(5) 2015:

"Transportation" means:
(a) a district's conveyance of a pupil by a school bus between the pupil's legal residence or an officially designated bus stop and the school designated by the trustees for the pupil's attendance; or

(b) "individual transportation" by which a district is relieved of actually conveying a pupil. Individual transportation may include paying the parent or guardian for conveying the pupil, reimbursing the parent or guardian for the pupil's board and room, or providing supervised correspondence study or supervised home study.

Inclement Weather and Bus Delays or Cancellations

In case of severe weather or other emergencies, official information about school closings will be broadcast on the local radio stations. Information will also be posted on the district web site.

(https://helenaschools.org/), the Transportation department's webpage https://helenaschools.org/departments/transportation/, Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/HSD1Transportation/), via Bright Arrow and via the Parent Portal app.

If there are inclement weather delays or canceled bus routes, information will be announced on media outlets through the Lincoln Center Administration Office.

Bus Registration

Bus registration should be completed each school year. Students are not rolled over from one year to the next. All bus registrations will need to be submitted through our Parent Portal App or in-person. For more information on our Parent Portal app, please visit

https://helenaschools.org/departments/transportation/parent-portal/

High School students who reside under the 3-mile limit and Elementary/Middle School students residing within the walk zones prepared for each K-5 and Middle School may register to ride; however eligibility is determined upon the availability of an established bus route and bus capacity Bussing for students that do not live within the designated transportation areas shall be provided on a first come - first served basis and are only granted on a case by case basis. Please call the Transportation Department for more information.

Guest Pass

Students who are not registered riders may ride a bus with a registered bus student as a guest. Students will need to get a 1-day pass from the school of their attendance. Students must have a note from a guardian that states who they will be riding with, the bus number and the location of the bus stop. The note must be verified by the school and signed off by the principal or designated school official. Students who do not follow the guest pass procedures will not be allowed to ride the school bus.

Bus Routes, Stops and Schedules

The bus stops are created with safety taking precedence over convenience. Bus routes are developed with safety and efficiency as top priorities. Roads must be county or city maintained for busses to traverse them. The district recognizes the travel time on buses extends the day for students. The district strives to minimize the time students must ride the bus. Transfer buses are used to minimize ride times for students given the geographic locations and numbers of school sites the district operates. Bus routes, stops and schedules are approved by the Lewis and Clark County Transportation Committee in June of each year.

Students are recommended to be at the bus stops 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time of arrival. Buses can arrive up to 2 minutes prior to their scheduled-pickup time. If the bus does not arrive as scheduled (up to 15 minutes late), please call the First Student dispatcher at 227-7400. Afternoon routes may arrive early at their designated stop due to a wide range of circumstances; Monday early outs, lack of student loads, district early releases, etc. The individual students, and their parents, are responsible for the student's behavior and conduct until the student has boarded or departed the bus.

Parent Portal Program

1. Parents may register for a free application to track the location of their student's bus. This application allows parents to see if their bus is running on time.
2. All bus students will be asked to carry a bus card. This card will inform parents when their students bus stop was picked up, via push notification message.
3. If parents have any questions about Parent Portal, they should contact the Helena Public Schools Transportation Office.

Parent Pickup Program

Parents of kindergarten and first grade students are asked by the Helena Public Schools Transportation

Department to request an escort for their student(s). The program was created to ensure the safe delivery of our most vulnerable student population. A parent or guardian is required to submit an escort form if their kindergarten or first grade students' must be accompanied by an adult off the bus. An example of a designated individual would be a grandparent, an older brother or sister, a neighbor, etc. Kindergarten and first grade students who have opt-in to the program and are not met at their bus stop will be delivered back to the nearest school site SACC program. Parents will be contacted for pickup locations. The opt-in permission form is available online at https://helenaschools.org/departments/transportation/parent-portal/ or it can be submitted manually via email or regular mail.

Transportation of School Related and Non-School Related Items

Contraband, weapons, flammable liquids, animals or other dangerous, objectionable or non-school related items shall not be transported on a school bus. School related items transported on the bus shall be small enough to be transported on the student's lap, adjacent seat or under the seat of the bus. School related items that would block exit isles or extend above the back of the seat will not be transported on the school bus. If you are unsure if an item is allowed, please contact the Transportation Department prior to the day your child plans on transporting the material or object**.**

Bus Behavior Conduct Guidelines and Consequences

Each transported student has the right to a safe and enjoyable ride to and from school that is free from intimidation, threat or harassment. Good conduct of all transported students while waiting for the school bus and while traveling to and from school is primary for a safe and enjoyable ride for all students. The district has a video that explains transportation safe riding practices that may be viewed on the Helena School District Transportation website or will be made available upon request.

The School District has established student behavior procedures that apply to all transported students while on the school bus and while in school bus loading or unloading areas. The bus and the bus stop are extensions of the school day. Each individual student, as well as his/her parents, or guardians, is responsible for the behavior of that student while on the school bus and in school bus loading or unloading areas.

Transportation service is a privilege that is granted by the district to eligible students and their parents or guardians that is contingent upon proper behavior according to established district policies, rules and standards. A student's eligibility to ride the school bus may be suspended or revoked for a violation of school bus safety or conduct rules and standards, or for violation of any other law or policy governing student conduct on a school bus. Revocation of a student's bus riding privileges is not considered an exclusion, expulsion or suspension from school, however unacceptable conduct on the school bus may result in suspension or expulsion from school. It shall be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport students to and from school when bus riding privileges are revoked. The district will not provide alternative transportation to a student whose transportation privileges have been suspended or revoked. (*Decisions regarding special education students will take into account related disabilities and individual education requirements pertaining to transportation).

Suspension or expulsion from school may also result in suspension from district sponsored transportation services.

It is important to note that students may also be suspended or expelled from riding any district sponsored transportation services for conduct violations occurring on school district busses even if they are still being allowed to attend school.

Corrective Disciplinary Action

Minimum Corrective Action: Driver identifies the unacceptable behavior and informs the student of the intent to complete a conduct report if the behavior continues.

Maximum Corrective Action: Unlimited transportation services suspension, school suspension, expulsion, and/or police notification.

Bus Seatbelt Procedures

It is the goal of the Helena Public Schools Transportation Dept. to provide the safest student transportation system available. The District requires that all students riding the school district buses comply with state law regarding the use of seatbelts. Students 6 years old or younger that are less than 60 pounds are required to utilize child seats and wear 5 point safety harnesses. Students who may require assistance in using seatbelts should ask the bus driver for help so that all students are safely belted in their seat before the bus is put in motion. Drivers will announce prior to the bus leaving that each student needs to be in their assigned seat and seatbelts fastened. Students 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.

Helena Public Schools Transportation Video and Audio

All buses are equipped with audio and video capabilities. The school district will only retain approximately 2 weeks audio and video storage history. The Helena School District does not guarantee the working operation of the surveillance system and therefore cannot guarantee the storage of up to 2 weeks of surveillance storage. Individuals who would like to view information pertaining to their child should make an appointment with the School District Transportation Department. Copies of bus video will not be released except under the request of court ordered subpoena.

Transportation Questions

Parents having any questions or requiring additional information are encouraged to contact the Helena School District Transportation Department at 324-2100.

School Safety

The personal safety of its students is of great importance to the Helena Public Schools. Thus, every possible consideration will be taken to manage and enhance conditions within the schools so that each student can feel secure, safe and unthreatened. To this end, standard safety precautions will be taken in all arenas of the school program and school facility.

Service Animals

The District complies with all state and federal laws, regulations, and rules regarding the use of service animals by students, staff, or community members when the service animal is required because the individual has a disability and the service animal is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of that individual.

Please contact the school office or the District Administration Office for more information and / or procedure related to the use of service animals in schools.

See also Board Policy 4035 Service Animals.

Sexual Harassment

A student has the right to attend and participate in school activities in an environment free from sexual harassment. Helena School District No. 1 does not tolerate sexual harassment in any form.

***Sexual harassment**:*

All references to sex discrimination throughout these procedures include gender-based harassment and sexual harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping, even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur whenever an individual makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

In the case of a student, denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or in the case of an employee denies or limits the employment, recruitment, consideration, or selection or treatment, or that makes such conduct a condition of the employee's employment status; OR

Has the purpose or effect of:

~ substantially interfering with a student's educational environment or employee's work environment.

~ creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.

~ depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or depriving an employee of the benefits of or deprives that employee of employment opportunities; or

~ making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for academic decisions affecting a student or employment decisions affecting an employee.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Quid pro quo: An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct

2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity;

or

3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), , or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

A determination of responsibility resulting from a formal complaint against a student for engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense. Complaints may be submitted via the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure. Please refer to 3005 Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment, Hazing Prevention and Reporting Policy for additional information regarding the District's prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

Sexual harassment includes sexual violence. Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of

drugs or alcohol or is unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Sexually violent acts include rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

Student Discipline

Students are expected to conduct themselves within the bounds set by the Board and the administrative regulations set forth by the Superintendent. Consideration for the rights and wellbeing of others, cooperation with all members of the school community and respect for oneself and others are the basic principles guiding student behavior.

The primary responsibility for student discipline within the school rests with the principal. The primary responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within the classroom lies with the individual classroom teacher. Corporal punishment shall not be used. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for students, staff, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or defense of property.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any student in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Disciplinary action may range from conferring with a teacher to expulsion from school. Continued infractions will have a cumulative effect in terms of disciplinary action.

These grounds stated below for disciplinary action apply whenever a student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities, including, but not limited to the circumstances set forth below:

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during, or after school hours or at any other time when school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity or event or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- Travel to and from school or a school activity, function, or event;
- Anywhere if conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, a threat to the safety and welfare of the student population or conduct that detrimentally effects the climate or efficient operations of the school.

See also Board Policy 3050 Student Discipline

Student Insurance

Neither the Helena School District, nor individual schools, provide accident or medical insurance coverage for students. Insurance coverage for students is made available through a private company for a minimum fee. If you do not have insurance, this is an excellent opportunity to obtain low cost coverage while your child is at school.

Insurance information is distributed at the beginning of the school year. Please review the information carefully, consider the benefits of such coverage, and complete the application as per instructions.

Threat Assessment Protocol

The safety of all students and staff is a priority for the Helena Public Schools. A threat assessment protocol has been designed for use with students who are engaged in situations that are determined to suggest harmful or dangerous behavior. Parents will be informed and involved throughout the process.

The following objectives are key components of the process:

- Identify and assess threats to determine the level of concern and action required.
- Administer a formal screener if the threat is determined to be viable.
- Organize resources and strategies to manage situations that involve students that pose threats to other students, the staff and/or the community.
- Maintain a culture of safety among students, teachers and parents and foster a learning environment that is free from harmful or dangerous behavior.

Visitor Procedure

General Guidance

In the past several years national attention surrounding school tragedies has raised our level of concern for the safety of our students. However, at the same time, we are encouraging parents and other volunteers to come into our buildings and work in our classrooms and other learning spaces. As a safety measure, we are asking that ALL visitors to the building stop at the office and make your presence known to staff.
You will be issued an identification badge when you check in.

Please note the following:

- If you are picking up a student before school is dismissed please come to the office and ask the office staff to call the child from his/her classroom. Please do not go directly to the classroom.
- Each morning all outside doors will be locked except the main entrance. Parents and others must enter through the main entrance.
- We are teaching students not to open locked doors for anyone during the school day. Please help us by using the main entrance doors even at dismissal.
- It will be our practice to question anyone in our school that we do not know.

Student Procedures

Students who want to have out-of-town visitors (school age students) accompany them to school must have prior permission from the building principal.

Students who are not regularly enrolled in school are not permitted to visit or join classes during school hours except when a written request has been submitted to the principal and the principal authorizes the visit.

Volunteer Procedures

Volunteers are asked to stop in the office and sign the "Volunteer Sign-In" book and obtain an identification badge. The sign-in book information helps us keep track of time donated to the school.

Pet Procedures

Students who wish to bring a pet to school must have prior permission from the building principal. All pets that visit the school must be up-to-date on all required vaccinations.

Videotaping of Students

The District has the right to use security and surveillance video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment.

Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. Students in violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or law shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Others may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Students may be videoed at events and practices open to the public, including but not limited to public performances, dress rehearsals, athletic practices open to the public and athletic competitions.

Video recordings from security and surveillance cameras may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention. Signs will be posted at various locations to inform students, staff, and members of the public that video surveillance cameras are in use.

The District will seek consent before recording students individually in the classroom.

Weapons

Gun Free Schools

The Board will follow federal law for any student who uses, possesses, controls, or transfers a firearm on school property. The Board hereby authorizes the Superintendent to modify the disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion.

The administrator may immediately suspend a student if, prior to a hearing, there is cause to believe the student brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school. In the case of a firearm violation the student may be expelled if the trustees find that the student knowingly brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school.

Possession of a Weapon in a School Building

The District will refer to law enforcement any person who possesses, carries, or stores a weapon in a school building, except as provided below. For the purposes of this section only, "school building" means all buildings owned or leased by the District that are used for instruction or for student activities; "weapon" means any type of firearm, a knife with a blade 4 or more inches in length, a sword, a straight razor, a throwing star, nun-chucks, brass or other metal knuckles, or any other article or instrument possessed with the purpose to commit a criminal offense. The Board may grant persons advance permission to possess, carry, or store a weapon in a school building. All persons who wish to possess, carry, or store a weapon in a school building must request permission of the Board at a regular meeting. The Board has sole discretion in deciding whether to allow a person to possess, carry, or store a weapon in a school building.

See also Board Policy 3050 Student Discipline

Academic Program

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction are of central importance in developing policy and determining goals for Helena School District No. 1. Curriculum and instruction are the core of the educational program of the Helena School District and exist for the sole purpose of preparing students for life. Questions regarding curriculum may be directed to your child's teacher, the building principal, or the District Curriculum Administrator at 324-2002.

PEAK Gifted and Talented Services

The Helena Public Schools gifted and talented program provides an array of comprehensive services for identified GT students (PreK-12).

Identified students receive a specialized intervention curriculum in the following curriculum areas: critical thinking, problem solving, logical reasoning, communication skills, leadership, research, technology, creativity, intrapersonal skills, and interpersonal skills. Various pullout activities are specially designed for gifted students to team with other gifted students from the district as they develop lifelong learning skills.

Specialized GT services include:

- Consultations to parents and faculty
- Identification for pull-out services through multi-factored assessments
- Weekly thematic pull-out intervention services for identified students in grades 3-5
- Twice-weekly lunch labs for identified students in grades 6-7
- Monthly intensive seminar pull-out services for identified students in grades 6-7
- Weekly meetings for identified students in grades 8-12
- Multi-day symposiums for identified students in grades 8-12
- Parenting initiatives: speakers series, discussion groups, and conferences
- Academic acceleration through a Referral Team Process
- Leadership Conference (grades 3 - high school) each spring
- College Credit opportunities for students in grades 9 – 12 For more information contact the GT Office at 406-324-1200.

Human Sexuality Instruction or Identity Instruction

A parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the care of a student may refuse to allow the student to attend or may withdraw the students from human sexuality instruction. The withdrawal or refusal to attend is an excused absence. Human sexuality instruction is instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about intimate relationships, sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, sexual acts, abstinence, contraception, or reproductive rights and responsibilities. These absences do not count toward the student's discretionary 10-day total.

Written consent from the parent or legal guardian is required prior to any student attending identity instruction. Identity instruction is instruction that has the goal or purpose of studying, exploring, or informing students about gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. A student is excused from not attending identity instruction unless the student's parent/guardian provided written consent for the student to be in attendance prior to the instruction.

The District will provide parents/guardians with at least five (5) school days' notice (but not more than 14 school days notice) before human sexuality or identity instruction is scheduled to occur.

See also Board Policy 2016 Human Sexuality Instruction

Kindergarten Entry Requirements

Montana State law states a child must be five years old on or before September 10 of the current school year in which they enter Kindergarten. A **birth certificate** is required at the time of registration as is a **record of completed immunizations**. Physical and dental examinations are recommended for children

entering the Helena Schools for the first time, as well as students entering seventh grade. Health forms, available in the doctor's office, should be completed and presented to the school at the time of registration.

A kindergarten program that is designated as a full-time program must allow a parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the enrollment of a child in school, as provided in MCA 20-5-102, to enroll the child half-time.

Libraries

The library is an integral part of the educational program of each elementary student. School Libraries are staffed by certified professional librarians who provide instruction in information research skills and serve as a resource person for the educational program. In each library, circulation procedures follow standard library practices.

All school library collections are accessible via the District web site at the following address:

https://hsd1.follettdestiny.com/common/welcome.jsp?context=saas32_2532340 .

Additionally, you can access periodical databases, World Book Online Encyclopedia, and Tumblebook Talking Book Library via the District web site.

Drop by your school library and check out what your library can do for you!

Multi Linguistic Learners

Helena Public Schools has the responsibility under federal law to serve students who have limited English and need English instructional services. The District will ensure opportunities are provided for parents to meet with building principals and teachers, provide information how parents can be involved in their child's education, and how parents can help their child attain English proficiency and succeed in school. The District works hard to provide information to parents in a format and language that they can understand.

Each year, within 30 days of the start of the school year or the student's enrollment if after the start, the District will notify parents of a student identified as limited English proficient of the reasons their child has so been identified, the child's level of English proficiency and how it was assessed, the methods of instruction used in its programs and others, how its program will help their child, and when the child is expected to gain English proficiency.

The District will provide notice to parents of limited English students when the child fails to make progress on annual achievement objectives within 30 days of learning of such status.

Parents seeking more information about the District's identification of and programs for students with limited English proficiency should contact Kaitlyn Hess at 406-324-2027.

Montessori Charter School

The Montessori Charter School is provided as an alternative instructional delivery model for students in grades one to five enrolled in the boundaries of the Helena Public Schools. The Montessori curriculum is an instructional program that is designed to "follow the child".

To allow each child to develop emotionally, intellectually, and physically at the child's own pace, the Montessori classroom is organized to provide freedom of movement and selection of activities. Within a framework of respect for the rights of others, the child learns to take responsibility for his/her own actions and learning. The teacher's job is to observe the child, to prepare the environment to meet each child's needs, to guide the child in the use of learning materials, and to be a positive role model in interpersonal relationships. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate extensively in a support system both within and outside of the classroom.

Montessori classrooms are located at Broadwater, Central and Smith Schools. Selection for enrollment in the Montessori Charter School is determined by lottery drawing. The lottery is held annually in the spring to determine Kindergarten and first grade enrollment. Waiting lists are also maintained for parents interested in Montessori enrollment in grades two, three and four.

Special Education Services

Helena Public School District #1 is committed to the rights of ALL children and to providing specially designed programming to meet their individual needs.

A child's educational future depends on active parent participation and commitment to this important educational process. It is important to take an active role to ensure that your child, if eligible, fully benefits from the many Special Education services available in Helena. If you are concerned with your child's progress in school, please contact the appropriate school staff and share your concerns. Refer to Procedural Safeguards in Special Education for students identified as having a disability under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Special%20Education/Guides/ProceduralSafeguards.pdf?ver=2020-12- 22-085315-637

PreK -12th Grade Child Find

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires Helena Public School District #1 to have a practical method to locate, evaluate, and identify all children who have a disability and need special education and related services.

Child Find includes:

- Preschool transition from the IDEA Part C Early Intervention Program;
- Preschool screening activities that reach out to the community at large, including private and home schools, as well as local Head Start programs; and
- School-based pre-referral activities for school-age students (K – 12th grade).

Preschool Child Find Clinics, for children aged 3 to 5, are scheduled 8 times a year to identify, locate, and evaluate all children suspected of having a disability. Screening is by appointment only and can be made by calling 324-1200.

Trailhead Program

Trailhead early intervention programing is designed for eligible preschool and elementary school students who have an autism diagnosis, average to high cognition, present with significant behavioral challenges, and meet other established criteria related to communication needs and adaptive skills. The program prepares them for a successful journey through school and in life. As part of the programing, children will be taught skills that will allow them to develop friendships, communicate with others, meet

classroom expectations, and access the curriculum in more generalized settings. Students who have been referred by their IEP teams and who meet the entry criteria enter the Preschool/Kindergarten Trailhead 1program at Ray Bjork Learning Center or the elementary Trailhead 2 program at Central School beginning in first grade.

Functional Life Skills Program

The purpose of the Functional Skills program is to provide intervention and support necessary for students on IEPs with intensive academic, physical, social communication, and regulation needs. Functional Life Skills programs are designed to serve students who may have significant cognitive delays, intensive physical needs, mobility and transfer needs, significant communication needs, multiple disabilities or significant adaptive skill deficits Kindergarten through fifth grade students who have been referred by their IEP teams and who meet the entry criteria attend the elementary FLS program located at Central School

Positive Behavioral Support Program

The purpose of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) community is to provide intervention and support necessary for students on IEPs with emotional and behavioral needs to be academically and socially successful. The PBS model focuses on reducing the inappropriate behavior(s),teaching more appropriate replacement behaviors and skills, and providing environmental supports necessary to be successful in more generalized settings. Positive behavioral interventions and supports assist children in learning positive responses through utilization of positive replacement behaviors that lead to more successful outcomes for the individual child. Kindergarten through fifth grade students who have been referred by their IEP teams and who meet the entry criteria attend the elementary PBS program located at Bryant School.

Day Treatment Program for Students in Need of a Therapeutic Setting

Helena Public School District #1 and Shodair work together to serve children in Kindergarten through fifth grade who have a high level of behavioral needs in combination with emotional disabilities that impact their successful functioning in their home, school, and community. The purpose is to work collaboratively, with families, schools, and communities, to support the child in the most normative home and school environment possible. This is accomplished through relationships that are formed in the classroom and psychotherapy settings. The program's goal is to help children and their families before more restrictive and expensive levels of care are needed. The Day Treatment Therapeutic Learning Center supports and empowers children to attain increased social integration, normative functioning, and self-sufficiency.

Kindergarten through fifth grade students who have been referred by their IEP teams and who meet the clinical criteria attend the elementary Day Treatment TLC program located at Ray Bjork Learning Center.

Special Education K – 12th Grade Programming

Helena Public School District #1 offers a continuum of special education services in each of our elementary, middle and high schools for children who have been identified with a disability and are eligible for special education and related service under IDEA). If you are concerned with your child's progress in school, please contact the appropriate school staff and share your concerns.

Screening Services for Helena Students

Speech & Language - Kindergarten students may be screened for speech and language problems based on consultation between the educator and the speech language pathologist.

Vision & Hearing – PreK – 12th Grade students may be screened for vision & hearing concerns based on consultation between the educator, school nurse and/or speech language pathologist (hearing).

Academic - Students K - 12 will be screened through the referral process for any academic difficulties.

Methods of screening may include checklists, observations, and formal instruments. Parents will be notified of any unusual performance and recommendations will be offered for further evaluation.
For further information contact the Special Education Office at 324-2005.

Student Assessment

Student assessment is recognized as a fundamental approach to providing information about individual differences, scholastic aptitude, readiness, interests, and achievement as well as curriculum development and program evaluation.

Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), each school is required to teach a rigorous curriculum aligned to the state academic standards and ensure a high-quality education for all students through a system of assessment and accountability. The results of both district and state assessments inform instructional decisions at the classroom and building level. Ongoing classroom assessments are also utilized to further inform instructional decisions.

Our schools administer the following District benchmark assessments:

Acadience is a reading assessment for students in kindergarten and first grade. The assessment is given three times a year and identifies specific areas to improve student's reading ability.

iReady is a criterion-based assessment given to students in grade 1 (math only), and grades 2-5 (Math and Reading) that includes diagnostic assessments given three times a year to identify student's areas of improvement as well as regular progress monitoring between benchmarks that determine if the instructional programming is on target for filling gaps in student learning.

Our schools administer the following State standardized assessments:

Montana Aligned to Standards Through Year Assessment (MASTS) is a new state assessment for grades 3-8 in math and reading. It replaces the former SBAC assessment. These assessments are given throughout the year in the form of testlets and align to the curriculum being taught at the time. The 2025-2026 school year will be the first year that this is implemented.

Montana Science Assessment (MSA) is given each year in grades 5 and 8. It is the general science assessment for academic state achievement reporting in Grades 5 and 8. The MSA is aligned to Montana Content Standards (2016) in Science. It is used to provide state, district, school, and individual student achievement information on the state- adopted content standards in science

College Board ACT (ACT) is given to all 11th graders. The ACT serves as Montana's statewide high school assessment under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as well as a National College Admission Exam that tests areas of English, Math, Reading, Science and Writing. This is a great opportunity for students to take a college entrance exam, at no cost, during the school day.

Multi State Alternative Assessment (MSAA) and Alternative Montana Science Assessment are two assessments offered to special education students who meet criteria. These assessments are

offered in reading, math, and science and are alternatives to the MAST and/or ACT.

The results of these assessments inform instructional decisions at the classroom, building, and district level. Ongoing classroom assessments are also utilized to further inform instructional decisions.

Student Support: Multi-Disciplinary Team Model

The Helena Public Schools provide a comprehensive student support program which includes proactive, preventative, and developmental lessons, while promoting a positive climate and environment for learning. Partnerships between support team members, students, families, educators, and the community benefit the well-being of each student in the following ways:

- Supports personal/social, academic, and career development to increase student success;
- Ensures equitable access to educational opportunities and school and community resources;
- Promotes and increases collaboration between teachers and the support team to ensure student needs and educational goals are being met;
- Enhances student transition to middle school.

Title I

Title I is a federally funded aid program for elementary and secondary schools reauthorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA). Title I funds are used to pay for extra educational services for children who are behind in school and at risk of not being successful learners. The purpose of Title I is to help at risk students meet the states' challenging academic standards. The District's Title One allocations are determined by the socio- economic status of its students, which is based on Free/Reduced lunch participation.

In schoolwide Title I programs, all students in the school are eligible to receive Title I services, and select students are provided additional services based on need. All Title I schools in Helena are schoolwide programs.

We invite you to visit our Title I schools and classrooms. If your child attends a Title I school, please consider getting involved with parent and family engagement activities. We also want to encourage you to volunteer in your child's school. If you wish to be a volunteer, you may complete the Volunteer Registration included in this handbook, or it is available online at http://www.helenaschools.org.

Helena School District #1 2025-2026
Technology Use Agreement for Students in Grades K-5

Helena School District #1 uses voice, data, and video electronic communication systems, including but not limited to devices, networks, servers, and hosted services, that allow educational opportunities for students and staff to communicate, collaborate, learn, and publish information. These system resources must be used to support education and/or research, and all student use must adhere to the educational goals and objectives of the district. Communications using the district systems are not private. Systems support and maintenance may require review and inspection of network activity, to include but not limited to student files and email.

21st Century Learning Skills require that students collaborate, think critically, communicate, create and innovate. There are many technological tools that support the development of 21st century skills (e.g., blogs, wikis, social networking sites, etc.). The district supports the use of these tools to enhance and enrich the learning and teaching environment. These tools must be used in support of education and not interfere with other student use of the systems.

Internet Filtering Statement

To comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act and to the extent practical, technology protection measures shall be used to block or filter as defined by law. Filtering is by no means meant to supersede the guidelines and requirements described in this document. Filtered access to some sites may still violate the Technology Use Agreement.

Appropriate Use of the Internet, Systems, and Technology Equipment

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior when using District technology systems. The lists below do not cover every possible situation. If you have any question about appropriate behavior, ask your teacher, librarian, or technology teacher.

I will

- use and access Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools responsibly.
- limit my bandwidth use on shared networks.
- use district and school technology to advance my education.
- use extreme caution when giving out personal information on the Internet, such as full name, address, telephone numbers, etc.
- take care of the equipment and leave it in good condition for the next student.
- follow instructions related to technology of all school personnel.
- use chat, email, and online discussions appropriately. (Remember that chats are not private.)
- ask for help with or report equipment or software problems.
- respect classroom expectations for technology use.
- only print what is necessary or assigned.
- immediately report any inappropriate email, chat, websites, etc. to school personnel.
- sign out/log off when finished using a shared device.
- cite my digital sources correctly.
- follow local, state, and federal copyright laws.
- return all borrowed technology equipment promptly and in the same condition as I received it.
- follow these expectations at school and at home.

I will not

- engage in academic dishonesty, violate the law, or access or disseminate harmful or inappropriate materials.
- share passwords.
- try to gain unauthorized or illegal access to district technology.
- access, distribute, download, or store any illegal, pornographic, abusive, obscene, or harassing materials on any District network or device.
- cyber-bully. Examples of cyber-bullying include but are not limited to sending threatening emails, posting derogatory or personal comments and/or photos or videos about or of someone on any online platform, sending harassing text messages, threatening, or intimidating someone, and/or spreading rumors about someone. (See Board Policy: 4.22 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Prevention Policy)
- plagiarize others' work and present it as my own.
- access, delete, or change files created by other students, faculty, or staff without their permission.
- participate in any online for-profit activities.
- download and/or install software.
- unplug or change lab devices without permission.
- create or distribute malicious software.

- stream video for personal use while connected to district networks.
- connect personal devices to any network other than the guest wireless as outlined below.
- eat or drink while using any school computer.

Guest Wireless Access (HSD-Guest)

Helena Public Schools provides wireless network access to students, staff, and guests who wish to use their personal devices while in district owned facilities. The following will apply:

- All users must follow the Technology Use Agreement when using a personal device on HSD-Guest.
- HSD-Guest is a public network, and as such there should not be an expectation of privacy or secure communications and no guarantees of service.
- Users are responsible for maintaining up-to-date antivirus software, firewalls, etc. on their personal devices.
- Printing is not available on HSD-Guest. Only those district systems that are publicly accessible via the internet will be accessible using HSD-Guest.
- Helena Public Schools will not provide technical support for users' personal devices on HSD-Guest.

Consequences for Violating the Student Technology Use Agreement

Depending on the age of the student and the severity and frequency of the misuse or abuse, one or more of the following consequences will occur:

- The student will receive a warning that includes specific discussion of the infraction.
- The student will be referred to the principal/administrator for discussion of the infraction.
- The student's parent/guardian will be notified by phone, personal conference, or official discipline referral.
- For serious or repeated internet misuse/abuse, students may lose access to the internet. (The terms of this restriction will be determined by the administrator or school board policy.)
- For serious or repeated technology equipment misuse/abuse, students may lose access to district technology and may need to develop a plan for restitution. (The terms of this restriction will be determined by the administrator or school board policy.)
- In some cases, a referral to proper authorities for disciplinary and/or legal action may be required.

Note: Depending on the circumstances, students who have lost district system or internet privileges may not use personal devices in lieu of district devices.

Helena Public Schools Chromebook Use Agreement (only necessary for Elementary if Chromebooks are sent home with students)

In order to ensure our students have consistent access to digital learning opportunities, 6th grade through 12th grade students will be assigned a Chromebook that they will use at school and at home (devices for K-5th grade students will be kept at school in most cases). **The form below needs to be completed and returned yearly for each student in grades 9-12**. The pages that follow are for family information and do not need to be returned with the form.

Section 1: Opt-out of District Device

Parents may choose to provide their child with a device that meets district technology requirements (see page 2). By agreeing to provide a device, parents are agreeing to send the device with students to school

for in-person instruction each day. Additionally, parents agree to ensure that the provided device has the necessary district software installed. (There is no charge for any of the required software.)

___ Initial here if you will provide your student's device. Continue to Section 3: Signatures.

Section 2: Optional Accidental Damage Waiver

Parents may pay $15 per year to provide accidental damage protection for the district-provided device. In the event that the device is accidentally damaged or found to be defective, the district will provide a replacement device, subject to the limitations listed on page 3. If you opt out of this coverage, any damage to the device will be considered a fine and added to the student's fees, per the chart.

Payments can be made directly at https://helenaschools.revtrak.net/.

___ I accept the accidental damage waiver and will pay the $15 fee.
___ I do not wish to elect coverage on my child's device. I understand that any costs associated with the repair or replacement of my child's device will be my sole responsibility.

Section 3: Parent and Student Signatures

By signing you are accepting responsibility for a device provided by the Helena Public Schools for use during the 2021-22 school year or, in the event that you are providing a device for this student to use, agreeing to the parameters listed above in Section 1. The student agrees to follow the district's Acceptable Use Policy and to follow the guidelines listed on pages 2-3 for the care and maintenance of their device.

_____	_____	
Student Name	Student Signature	Date
_____	_____	
Parent Name	Parent Signature	Date

Digital Learning Student Device Guide (only necessary for Elementary if your school goes digital)
The information in this document applies to all devices issued to students by the Helena Public Schools.

In order to run appropriate learning software, all devices must meet or exceed hardware requirements:

- Chromebook: 4GB RAM; 32GB SSD; 11 or 14" screen, camera, Chrome OS 81.0.4044.127
- Laptop: Core i3, 128GB SSD, 8GB RAM, 13" screen size, camera, Windows/MacOS
- iPad: current iPad or iPad Pro, 32GB storage, 9.7" display, iPad OS 13 Additionally, devices must

have the following free software installed at all times:

- Microsoft Office 365 (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote) http://helenaschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Student-Office-365-Installation-Guide.pdf
- Microsoft Teams https://teams.microsoft.com/uswe-01/downloads
- Google Chrome (Web Browser) https://www.google.com/chrome/

All devices must be able to connect to wifi networks, including HSD networks (HSD-Guest). Parents

and students must sign and return the Chromebook Use Agreement (page 1) each fall.

- Student devices and chargers will be collected following 8th grade and 12th grade. Any student who transfers out of HSD will be required to return their device and charger. If a device and/or charger are not returned, the parent/guardian will be held responsible for payment in full. If payment is not received, the parent/guardian will be turned over to a collection agency.

The protective shell of the Chromebook only provides basic protection from everyday use. It is not designed to prevent damage from drops or abusive handling. We recommend a protective case be used when transporting the device. Cases are included for all devices provided by the Helena Public Schools.

All students are required to take their device home each night throughout the school year for charging. **DEVICES MUST BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL EACH DAY IN A FULLY CHARGED CONDITION.** Chromebook
batteries are designed to last throughout the day under average use. In the event that a device's battery is fully discharged at school, the student will be responsible for completing work with paper and pencil and transferring this work to a digital format as necessary outside of the school day.

District Chromebooks can be identified in the following ways:
- Service tag and serial number
- Individual's account username or device name

Under no circumstances are students to modify, remove, or destroy service tag labels. Parents/Students will be charged for full replacement cost of a device if the service tag is modified, removed, or destroyed.

Accidental Damage or Loss Protection Details (only necessary for Elementary if your school goes digital)

Helena Public Schools recommends the purchase of accidental damage protection prior to the deployment of the Chromebook to your student. Helena Public Schools will be the sole provider of this protection.

Under this accidental damage protection plan, the Chromebook is protected against accidental damage or loss due to an act of nature. The Helena Public Schools will require that a police report be submitted in cases of theft. Fraudulent reporting of theft will be turned over to the police for prosecution. A student making a false report will also be subject to disciplinary action as outlined by board policy.

This protection plan does not cover loss of the Chromebook and/or its accessories, cosmetic damage, or damage caused by intentional misuse and abuse. The Helena Public Schools will assess the Chromebook damage and repair or replace the device if the damage is determined to be accidental and within the protection guidelines.

The device should not be disassembled, nor should there be any attempt to repair it by anyone other than a school authorized vendor. The Helena Public Schools has the right to decide when a Chromebook should be repaired in house versus filing a claim with the manufacturer.

Students and parents will be charged for Chromebook damage that is a result of misuse or abusive handling. Parents will be billed for parts and labor. ***Parents/Students will be charged for full replacement cost of a device that has been damaged beyond repair due to intentional misuse or abuse.***

Loaner Chromebooks may be issued to students when their Chromebooks are sent out for repair by the Technology Department. If repair is needed due to malicious damage, the school may refuse to provide a loaner Chromebook.

Estimated Cost Replacement Table:

Part	Replacement Cost*	Accidental Damage	Intentional Damage
Display	$100	Covered	Full Price
Keyboard Replacement	$110	Covered	Full Price
Bottom Assembly	$150	Covered	Full Price
Battery	$60	Covered	Full Price
Bezel	$80	Covered	Full Price
Trackpad	$60	Covered	Full Price
AC Adaptor	$25	Covered	Full Price

* Repair costs are estimates and can change.

Payment for the accident protection plan is due at the time this form is returned to the school. **If this form is returned without payment, your accident protection plan will not be active until payment is received.** ***Coverage is Effective from the date of payment to August 31, 2023.***

2025-2026 Device Use Agreement & School Policy Agreement (only necessary for Elementary if your school goes digital)

In this agreement, "Device" means iPad, Chromebook, or laptop and all of its components, software, apps, and charger.

TERMS: You will comply at all times with the Helena Public Schools Student Technology Use Agreement. Any failure to comply may terminate your rights of possession effective immediately, and the school may repossess the property. Devices are assigned to a single individual and are not to be shared.

TITLE: Legal title to the device is in the school district, and it shall remain in the school district. The student's right of possession and use is limited to and conditioned upon full and complete compliance with this agreement and the mobile device guidelines.

LOSS OR DAMAGE: If the property is accidentally damaged or incurs loss due to an act of nature, Helena Public Schools will assess the device damage and repair or replace the device under the accidental damage or loss policy. If the property is stolen, a police report must be filed by the student or the parents/guardians of the student involved in the loss of property. Loss or theft of the property must be reported to the school by the next school day after the occurrence. Fraudulent reporting of theft will be turned over to the police for prosecution.

REPOSSESSION: Students not complying with all terms of this agreement, including the timely return of the

property, will be declared to be in default, and authorities may be sent to your place of residence or other location of the device to take possession.

TERM OF AGREEMENT: Your right to use and possession of the property terminates upon student withdrawal from HSD.

APPROPRIATION: Your failure to timely return the property and the continued use of it for non-school purposes without the school's consent will be considered unlawful appropriation of school property.

MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: The district provides access to Microsoft Office 365 for cloud-based storage. District issued emails are created for educational work and a collaborative online workspace. Students will have access to apps and web based programs on their device for educational purposes that have been authorized by the teacher and/or school. Parents agree to provide consent for the use of these programs that are provided limited student information such as Microsoft Office 365, district cloud storage and collaborative educational workspace. Helena Public Schools complies with Montana student data privacy regulations.

Board of Trustees

School Board Meetings

Regular monthly meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. The regular monthly meetings are generally held at the Lincoln Center in the Board Meeting room.

Special meetings are called through regularly adopted procedure with legal action restricted to those items listed in the notice of the meetings.

Executive Sessions are the only type of Board meetings not open to the public. These sessions are confined to consideration of matters involving or affecting national or state security, disciplining, hearing of complaints against an employee, etc.

Getting an Item Placed on the School Board Agenda

In order for the Board to properly consider any matter you may bring before it, the Superintendent or Chairman should be notified in writing not later than the Wednesday preceding the Tuesday meeting date. The request to be on the agenda should include the topic and details of the problem to be resolved.

Role of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees Represents the Community in:

- Establishing a sound philosophy for all educational programs and activities.
- Adopting policies for operation of the school program.
- Providing leadership for educational progress through logical goals and objectives.
- Implementing adequate methods of evaluation of existing programs.
- Developing sound financial plans consistent with the school needs and community resources.

Board of Trustees - Elected Trustees

- Jennifer McKee, Chair
- Jennifer Walsh, Vice Chair
- Janette Armstrong
- Rachel Robison
- Linda Cleatus
- Siobhan Hathhorn
- Jenny Murnane-Butcher
- Kay Satre

Student Board Representatives

- Brock Gardipee, CHS
- Delaney Lynch, HHS

2025-2026 District Calendar

Helena Public Schools
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Holiday and Student Dismissal Dates

August 25 & 26	Staff Orientation
August 27	First Day of School for Grs 1-5, Gr 6 CRA & HMS, Grs 9-12 PAL, Gr 9 CHS & HHS
August 28	First Day of School for Grs 7-8 CRA & HMS, Grs 10-12 CHS & HHS
September 1	Labor Day - No School - District Closed
September 2	First Day of School for Kindergarten
October 16 & 17	Educator Conferences-No School
November 3	2nd Quarter Begins: Grades 6-12
November 26-28	Thanksgiving Break-No School
November 27 & 28	District Closed
December 1	Trimester 2 Begins: Grades K-5
December 5	12:00 P.M. Grades K-5 Student Early Dismissal
December 5	Grades 6-12: Full Day of School
December 5	P.M. K-5 Staff Records Day
December 22 - Jan. 2	Winter Break-No School
December 24, 25 & January 1	District Closed
January 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day-No School-District Closed
January 21, 22 & 23	High School Semester Testing
January 23	Grades K-5: Full Day of School
January 23	12:00 P.M. Grades 6-8 Early Dismissal
January 23	P.M. 6-8 Staff Records Day
January 26	No School K-12, HS Staff In-Service & Records Day
January 27	3rd Quarter Begins: Grades 6-12
February 16	Presidents' Day-No School-District Closed
March 16	Trimester 3 Begins: Grades K-5
March 30- April 3	Spring Break-No School
April 6	4th Quarter Begins: Grades 6-12
May 1	Vigilante Day - No School Grades 9-12/11:00 AM Dismissal K-8
May 25	Memorial Day-No School-District Closed
June 6	High School Graduation
June 8, 9	High School Semester Testing
June 9	Last Day & 12:00 p.m. Early Dismissal Students K-8
June 9	Last Day for Students 9-11
June 9	P.M. K-8 Staff Records Day
June 10	HS Staff In-Service-Records Day

Mondays are Professional Release days for Helena School District staff. School for students will dismiss early. Please see below.

- Elementary School Student day ends 45 minutes early
- Middle School Student day ends 45 minutes early
- High School Student day ends 45 minutes early

- First Day of School for Various Grade Levels
- Holiday or Break- No School-All Grades
- Staff Orientation
- Last Day of School 9-12 Students
- High School Semester Testing
- Early Dismissal Students K-5 ONLY/Halfday K-5 Records Day
- Early Dismissal Students 6-8/ Halfday 6-8 Records Day
- Early Dismissal K-8 Students Last Day / Halfday K-8 Rec. Day
- HS Staff In-Service-Records Day-No School K-12
- Vigilante Day-K-8 Released 11:00 AM / HS No School

July 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

July 3 & 4 District Closed

August 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Trustees Approved on 2/11/2025

Helena Public Schools Central Administration

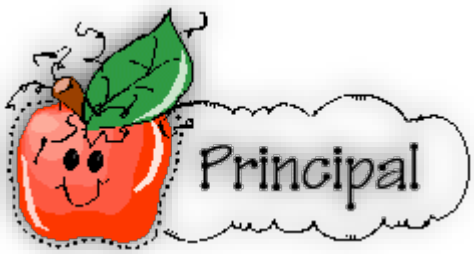
Superintendent	Rex Weltz	406-324-2001
Assistant Superintendent 6-12	Josh McKay	406-324-2004
Assistant Superintendent PK-5	Dr. Justine Alberts	406-324-2031
Chief of Staff	Barbara Ridgway	406-324-2006
Human Resource Admin	Keri Mizell	406-324-2010
Special Education	Lona Carter	406-324-2024
Business Services	Janelle Mickelson	406-324-2040
Technology	Gary Myers	406-324-2114

Helena Public School Elementary Principals

Broadwater	Kellie Boedecker	406-324-1130
Bryant	Letitia Wilkins	406-324-1200
Central	Nick Radley	406-324-1230
Four Georgians	Carrie Shinkle	406-324-1300
Jefferson	Brice Burton	406-324-2060
Jim Darcy	Jill Nyman	406-324-1410
Kessler	Riley Thatcher	406-324-1700
Rossiter	Wynn Randall	406-324-1500
Smith	Sarah Simpson	406-324-1530
Warren	Abby Kuhl	406-324-1600

Middle School and High School Principals

C.R. Anderson	Kathleen Prody	406-324-2800
Helena Middle	Cal Boyle	406-324-1000
Capital High	Brett Zanto	406-324-2500
Helena High	Brian Kessler	406-324-2200
PAL	Matt Carey	406-324-1630



2025-2026 Helena Public School Parent
Permission Form Pre-K – 5 Elementary School Students

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

This form will be signed and will be in effect for the 2025-2026 academic year in the Helena School District. If at any time you would like to make changes, please contact your child's school.

Parents: Please read the handbook information related to the topics below before completing this form. Once you have read the information provided, please mark your choices, sign the form and return to the school.

___ Yes ___ No I have read, understand, and give my permission for my child to attend and participate in field trips.

___ Yes ___ No I have read and understand the information regarding weapons in school.

___ Yes ___ No I have read and understand the Technology Use Agreement, and I give my permission for my child to use the internet and the Microsoft Office 365 collaboration tools to include email access.

___ Yes ___ No I have read and understand the policy regarding cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and other devices with access to online applications and resouces.

___ Yes ___ No I give permission for photographs and/or filming by the news media or the school district.

___ Yes ___ No I give permission for my childs work to be published on the district and/or school website and other district/school social media sites.

___ Yes ___ No I give permission for my childs picture to be published on the district and/or school website, other district/school social media sites, or in the school yearbook if applicable.

___ Yes ___ No I give permission for the release or directory information as defined by FERPA. Directory information includes name, address, telephone number, gender, grade level, birth date & place, parent/guardian name and address, academic awards or honors, student photograph, school activities and period of school attendance.

___ Yes ___ No The school district has identified web-based tools and applications for learning. A complete list can be found on the district website (www.helenaschools.org). Some tools require the students school email address and name prior to approval for use. If you object to your childs use of approved websites, please indicate by checking NO to the left.

___ Yes ___ No I have read and understand the 2025-2026 Student/Parent Handbook.

_____ _____
Parent Signature Date

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Volunteer Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Available Start date: _____ **Certified in First Aid/CPR? YES NO**

Emergency Contact (Name, Relation, Phone): _____

1.) Grade Preference(s) (circle all that apply):

PRIMARY (K-3)	INTERMEDIATE (4-5)	MIDDLE (6-8)	HS (9-12)
Broadwater	Bryant	Helena Middle	Capital High
Central	Kessler	CRA Middle	Helena High
Four Georgians	Hawthorne		PAL
Jefferson	Jim Darcy		
Rossiter	Smith		
Warren			

2.) Area(s) of Interest (circle all that apply):

Classroom/small group assistance **Mentoring** **Tutoring** **Special Events** **Sporting Events**
Speech/Debate **Guest Speaker** **Music** **Theatre** **Clerical** **Parent Council**
Peak/Gifted & Talented

3.) Experience: Please list any previous paid/volunteer experience with students.

4.) Availability (check all that apply):

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before School							
Morning							
Lunch							
Afternoon							
After School							
Special Events							

5.) Child/Children's Name/School/Classroom (if applicable):

Name: _____ **School:** _____ **Classroom:** _____

Name: _____ **School:** _____ **Classroom:** _____

Name: _____ **School:** _____ **Classroom:** _____

Montana Authorization to Possess or Self-Administer Asthma, Severe Allergy, or Anaphylaxis Medication

For this student to possess or self-administer asthma, severe allergy, or anaphylaxis medication while in school, while at a school- sponsored activity, while under the supervision of school personnel, before or after normal school activities (such as while in before- school or after-school care on school-operated property), or while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored activities, this form must be fully completed by 1) the prescribing physician/physician assistant/advanced practice registered nurse, and 2) an authorizing parent, an individual who has executed a caretaker relative educational or medical authorization affidavit, or legal guardian.

Student's Name:_____ School:_____
Sex: (Please circle) Female / Male City/Town: _____
Birth Date: ____/____/_____ School Year:_
_____(Must be renewed annually)

Authorization by Physician/PA/APRN:

The above-named student has my authorization to carry and self-administer the following asthma, severe allergy, or anaphylaxis medication:
Medication: (1)_____ Dosage: (1) _____
(2)_____ (2) _____

I confirm this student has been instructed in the proper use of this medication and is able to self-administer this medication without school personnel supervision. I have formulated and provided to the parent/guardian or caretaker relative a written treatment plan for managing asthma, severe allergies, or anaphylaxis episodes and for medication use by this student during school hours and school activities.

_____ _____ _____
Signature of Physician/PA/APRN Phone Number Date

Authorization by parent, individual who has executed a caretaker relative educational or medical authorization affidavit, or guardian:

As the parent, individual who has executed a caretaker relative educational or medical authorization affidavit, or guardian of the above named student, I confirm this student has been instructed by his/her health care provider on the proper use of this/these medication(s). He/she has demonstrated to me he/she understands the proper use of this medication. He/she is physically, mentally, and behaviorally capable to assume this responsibility. He/she has my permission to self-medicate as listed above, if needed. If he/she has used epinephrine during school hours, he/she understands the need to alert the school nurse or other adult at the school who will provide follow-up care, including making a 9-1-1 emergency call.

I acknowledge the school district or nonpublic school and its employees and agents are not liable as a result of any injury arising from the self-administration of medication by the student, and I indemnify and hold them harmless for such injury, unless the claim is based on an act or omission that is the result of gross negligence, willful and wanton conduct, or an intentional tort.

I agree to work with the school in establishing a plan for use and storage of backup medication. This will include a predetermined location to keep backup medication to which the student has access in the event of an asthma, severe allergy, or anaphylaxis emergency. I have provided the following back up medication: _____

I understand in the event the medication dosage is altered, a new "self-administration form" must be completed, or the health care provider may rewrite the order on his/her prescription pad and I, the parent/caretaker relative/guardian, will sign the new form and assure the new order is attached.

I understand it is my responsibility to pick up any unused medication at the end of the school year, and any medication not picked up will be disposed of.

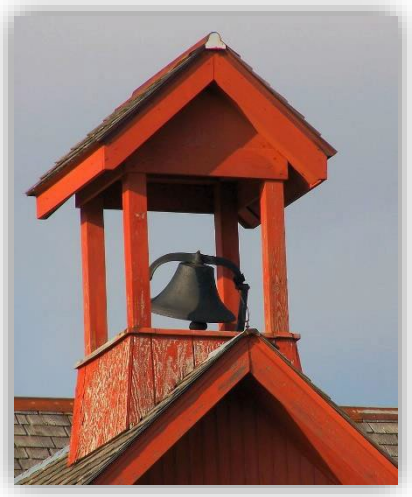
I authorize the school administration to release this information to appropriate school personnel and classroom teachers.

Parent/Caretaker/Guardian relative signature:_____ Date: _____

(Original signed authorization to the school; a copy of the signed authorization to the parent/guardian and health care provider)

Helena Public Schools Bell Schedules for 2025-2026

Mondays are Early Release for Students and Professional Collaboration time for Staff



2025-2026 Monday Student Schedule

Monday	Start Time	End Time
Elementary	8:30 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
Middle School	8:05 a.m.	2:05 p.m.
High School	8:20 a.m.*	2:30 p.m.**

*First period begins.
**Seventh period ends.
Zero period starts at 7:32 a.m. on Monday.

2025-2026 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Student Schedule

Tu, Wed, Th, F	Start Time	End Time
Elementary	8:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.
Middle School	8:05 a.m.	2:50 p.m.
High School*	8:20 a.m.*	3:15 p.m.*

*First period begins.
**Seventh period ends.
Zero Period Starts at 7:25 AM on Tu, W, Th, F