

PARENT/STUDENT TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK 2026-2027



We Are Shepherd: A safe, respectful, and positive community where our high expectations and emphasis on personal growth support all students in being successful, lifelong learners.

Shepherd School District #37

Shepherd, Montana

www.shepherd.k12.mt.us

BUS-PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

With great enthusiasm, Shepherd Schools opens the doors for the current school year. Transportation for our students is a very important part of and a necessity in the Shepherd School system. The transportation schedule should operate effectively and smoothly. However, parents, students and transportation personnel are asked for their full cooperation with the transportation schedule and rules.

You, as parents and student passengers, can help make each ride a safe ride by carefully reading this brochure and following the rules and regulations.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Drea O'Donnell

Superintendent

School District #37

SEXUAL/RACIAL HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION POLICY STATEMENT

The Shepherd Public School is committed to a positive and productive working and learning environment free from discrimination. Discrimination adversely affects morale and interferes with employee and student ability to work and learn. The District prohibits sexual/racial harassment or intimidation of its employees or students, whether committed by a co-worker, supervisor, subordinate, contractor, volunteer or student, and finds such behavior just cause for disciplinary action. The District will not tolerate such behavior between members of the same or opposite sex. The District will take prompt, effective and remedial action on complaints, grievances, and reports of sexual/racial harassment or intimidation, including informal reports of inappropriate sexual or gender-directed conduct, which come to the attention of the District.

The District prohibits retaliation against any employee or student because he/she has made a report of alleged sexual/racial harassment or intimidation against any employee or student who has testified, assisted, or participated in the investigation of a report. Retaliation is itself a violation of federal and state regulations prohibiting discrimination and will lead to disciplinary action against the offender.

This policy applies to individuals attending any events on District property, whether or not District-sponsored, and to any school-sponsored events, regardless of location.

A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to student disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, consistent with the District's student discipline policy.

TITLE IX

No person at Shepherd High School shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Inquiries regarding sexual harassment (sex) discrimination or (sex) intimidation should be directed to the Shepherd Public Schools Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both. The Board designates the following individual to serve as the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Title: Heather Ekness

Office Address: 7842 Shepherd Road, Shepherd, MT 59079
Email: h-ekness@shepherd.k12.mt.us
Phone Number: 406-373-5300 ext. 180
Title IX Coordinator- High School Counselor, 373-5300 ext. 180

SPECIAL NOTICE: Students are assigned to an A.M. and P.M. bus route, and may not ride any other bus than their designated buses without Transportation Director approval. As in the past, you can register your child(ren) for an A.M. route and a different P.M. route.

We cannot assign riders on different buses each week or accommodate rotation by day/week or any other situation where the rider is changing buses or going to anywhere other than the assigned address in Infinite Campus.

If something that you feel is an emergency happens and you need your child(ren) to ride a different bus, contact either one of the secretaries or myself. We do appreciate a note at some time stating the nature of the emergency for our records. In most cases, you will receive a call, either from the Transportation Supervisor or one of the secretaries, so that we can verify your request. Remember, on a normal day we transport over 500 students, and some of the buses run close to full, so for the safety of the children, your help in this matter is appreciated.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Transportation by school bus is not mandatory. This service is provided for those who wish to ride under the terms set up.

The following information for parents and students states the regulations governing riding. We must set up rules which must be followed. Non-compliance may be met by refusal to transport. It is expected that all concerned will read this bulletin, and in case there are questions, ask for an explanation in order that there be no misunderstanding.

Information regarding school bus service may be obtained by calling:

Shepherd Schools

Transportation Office

373-5300 High School

373-5331 Transportation Director

373-5873 Middle School

373-5516 Elementary School

The transportation program is set up to provide bus service.

The Trustees of School District #37 shall review all bus routes yearly. Changes will be made in accordance with State of Montana rules and regulations. The most economical and feasible routes with maximum service to the residents of School District #37 will be the policy. Requests for changes in bus routes must be made by May 15th of each year.

1. The school transportation program is not a taxi service for students, parents, or unauthorized persons. We cannot transport riders to alternate addresses for anything other than an emergency or scheduling conflict; this includes asking to drop students at a friend's house for

an after-school play date. Any and all changes must be approved by the Transportation Director.

2. Buses should not be expected to operate over roads that are not properly maintained, or on private lanes leading to and from the residence to the highway, or on roads where adequate turn-arounds are not provided.
3. District policy is that all buses will have turn-arounds instead of having to back up.
4. Buses, which are school-owned, will meet the Montana State Highway Patrol inspections. Drivers will be certified according to regulations of the State Department of Public Instruction.
5. The School District reserves the right to discontinue this service when the bus available is loaded to less than 50% of capacity.

The bus operation will be similar to the plan followed last year. Buses, which meet the State Highway Patrol inspection, will be used and drivers will be certified according to regulations of the State Department of Public Instruction.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

All school bus drivers in School District #37 have received instruction in the safe methods of operating a school bus. This program includes all phases of school bus operation, including actual driving experience. New drivers receive instruction in the operation of buses, rules and regulations of the transportation program, and in the direction of school bus passengers.

School bus drivers in Montana are required to:

1. Have 5 years licensed driving experience;
2. Hold a valid Montana Commercial Driver's license;
3. Hold a valid first aid card; and
4. Pass a rigid physical examination and hold a DOT Medical Examiner's Certificate every two years.

To ensure safety, the buses are inspected twice a year, and all buses are under continuous over-the-road supervision.

1. The school bus driver has the responsibility and the authority to maintain discipline on the school bus.
2. The school bus driver will assign seats by the third week of school. Each student will be responsible for their assigned seat and the condition of that seat and bus area.
3. The School District will be compensated for any malicious damage caused to a school bus by any student.
4. Drivers are required to report misbehavior on the school bus to the parents, transportation supervisor, and, if it is a serious or third ticket infraction, to the building principal.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Good conduct aboard the school bus is of extreme importance. Riders should regard the bus as another school room and act accordingly, except that conversation in normal tones is permitted.

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

All Shepherd School buses have video and audio equipment installed.

I. Prior to Boarding the School Bus

1. Be on time and be waiting for the bus at the approved school bus stop. Students must be on time - **please be 5 minutes early**.
2. Stay off of the road while waiting for the bus.
3. Do not participate in horse play or destroy surrounding property.
4. Wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before attempting to board the bus.
5. Do not run toward the bus in an effort to be the first to board the bus.
6. Elementary riders will be issued an RFID card that must be scanned as they enter the bus. Students without a card may be denied entry. Lost cards can be purchased and replaced at the elementary office.

II. While Riding the School Bus

1. The driver is in full command of the bus and students.
2. Outside of ordinary conversation, students will observe classroom conduct while on the bus.
3. Students should be seated correctly in their seats at all times, especially when the bus is in motion.
4. Students will keep the bus clean of debris.
5. All students will be assigned seats by the third week of school.
6. If a student opens a window, they are to close it, too.
7. There will be no weapons, fireworks, lighting matches, cigarette lighters, etc., or anything else that would endanger the safety of the riders or bus driver. There will also be no smoking or possession of or use of alcoholic beverages, possession of or use of drugs or other serious infractions on the bus at any time. Acts or even suggestions of acts of physical violence or bullying can be viewed as a serious infraction. Violation of these items will result in the consequences listed in Section IV (c).
8. Students will be assigned to the bus(es) that provide service to the route on which they live or stay. They will ride this assigned bus(es) to and from school. In the case of an emergency, they may ride another bus, provided permission is given by the principals and/or transportation supervisor, and all school personnel are informed. A written note will be requested stating the nature of the emergency, and phone contact with the parent will be attempted to authenticate the request.
9. Arms or head will not be extended out of bus windows at any time.
10. Students will not get on or off or move about on the bus while it is in motion.

11. Any damage to the bus will be reported to the driver at once.
12. Students will not eat any food or snacks or drink beverages on the bus unless permitted to do so by the driver.
13. Cell phones and electronic device use is not allowed and must remain in backpacks or out of sight.
14. Students will not exit from the emergency door unless a bona fide emergency exists.
15. The coaches, advisors, or persons in charge during all activity trips will be responsible for policing the buses after each trip.

III. After Leaving the School Bus

1. Do not rush or push while unloading from the bus.
2. Students will be discharged at their approved school bus stop only.
3. Students should go directly from their bus stop to their home or class.

IV. Consequences Regarding Misbehavior on the Buses

Drivers are required to report misbehavior on the school bus to the transportation supervisor and if it is a serious or third ticket infraction to the building principal. Such reports will result in one of several possibilities. They are:

- a) Minor infractions will be issued a bus discipline ticket indicating a warning. This ticket must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the driver by the student before he/she will be able to board the bus (usually the following day).
- b) A second ticket issued by the bus driver, "Stating the student is immediately off the bus for 3 days" for any infraction that has been done. A form letter from the school will be enclosed.
- c) A serious infraction or a third ticket issued by the bus driver stating the student is immediately off the bus for two weeks' suspension (dates will be on ticket). A form letter from the school will be enclosed. (A serious infraction as described previously.)
- d) Repeated violations may result in permanent suspension from bus riding privileges.
- e) All violations, serious or not are subject to review by the transportation supervisor.

Tickets will be sent to the parent via email from the Transportation Director or Building Principal. Paper tickets will be used in the event no email address is available.

*Serious infractions are those violations which would be considered suspendable in board policy or in this Student/Parent handbook.

*When students are suspended, parents are responsible for their transportation to and from school.

The driver or bus supervisor will report any minor or serious infractions to the building principal. The building principal will use discretion in determining whether the violation will enter the school discipline plan.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

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

1. Ensure that your children are at their bus stop five (5) minutes early.
2. Dress your children in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.
3. Encourage school bus safety at home. Caution your children regarding safe behavior and conduct while riding a school bus.
4. Establish a safety-minded example for your children.
5. All vehicles are required by law to stop when the bus's flashing red lights are in operation. Please report any violators to the Transportation Supervisor.
6. If you have a problem with your bus service, call the transportation supervisor at the Transportation Department at 373-5331. Drivers have a schedule to keep and are in a vulnerable position while driving the route, so it is unnerving to them to be approached while driving the route.
7. The buses are generally crowded with students and their normal backpacks. Therefore, animals and large projects are better transported by other means.
8. **In case of an accident, please do not go to the scene of the accident, and (if you feel you must go to the scene) DO NOT REMOVE your child. The Highway Patrol requires a list of the students and where they were on the bus at the time of the accident, and we need to assess the situation before anyone is to be released. We will dispatch another bus and continue our route when we have been cleared to do so.**

School bus routes are numbered. It is suggested that the route number, the name of the driver and the bus arrival times at your bus stop be recorded below for continuous reference during the year.

<u>BUS NUMBER</u>	<u>BUS DRIVER'S NAME</u>	<u>TIMES</u>
_____	_____	A.M.
_____	_____	P.M.

EMERGENCY WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event that weather conditions during the night or early morning create hazardous driving conditions, information pertaining to the closing of the school will be broadcast over the following radio stations. **The Infinite Campus Message system will automatically call parents/guardians using the phone numbers recorded for families in the school offices.**

BEGINNING AT ABOUT 7:00 A.M.

If buses are dispatched early during the day due to adverse weather conditions, radio announcements will be broadcast immediately. Parents will be notified by phone as to the early dismissal, so you can make arrangements concerning your child.

The Shepherd Schools Transportation Department solicits your cooperation in the continuing effort to make School District #37 school buses a safe mode of transportation for your children.

SCHOOL DISTRICT #37
SHEPHERD, MONTANA 59079

DISCIPLINE REPORT

Date _____ Route No. _____ A.M. or P.M. _____

Driver _____

Student Rider _____ Grade _____

The above-named school bus rider was guilty of misconduct aboard the school bus.

The following (x's) will specify the acts committed:

_____ Failure to remain in seat while bus is moving or stopped.

_____ Loud talking, shouting or screaming

_____ Making obscene gestures.

_____ Teasing or annoying other riders.

_____ Throwing books, spit wads, etc.

_____ Fighting

_____ Littering Bus

_____ Profanity, vulgarity.

_____ Disrespect (drivers)

_____ Other acts:

(Describe) _____

The following action will be taken:

_____ Warning. _____ Riding Privileges Revoked until _____ (date)

_____ Riding Privileges revoked until further notice. Call _____ (phone)

_____ Riding Privileges permanently revoked.

For further information, please contact 373-5516 or 373-6481.

Parent Signature

Remarks

Driver's Signature

Administrators Signature

RECOMMENDED CONTENTS FOR BODY FLUID CLEAN-UP KITS

At a minimum, a body fluid clean-up kit should be able to perform the following steps and contain the following equipment:

1. Protect the person cleaning the spill.
One pair of protective gloves
2. Stabilize, isolate, and pick up the fluid spill.
Absorbent powder to contain the liquid.
Scoop or scraper to pick up the powder gel.
3. Wipe up any remaining residue on student(s), floor or other surfaces.
Two (2) absorbent disposable towels
4. Cleanse the person who spilled, the spill area, and the person cleaning the spill.
Three (3) disposable, disinfectant towelettes
5. Safely dispose of waste and clean-up materials.

Two (2) disposable plastic bags. Use one bag to hold all powder and clean-up materials, including gloves.

The additional bag is used for the disposal of wastes, including the used disposable bag. This means of double bagging will help ensure that no contamination will be on the exterior of the bag.

Source: Montana Pupil Transportation Advisory Council

INFECTION CONTROL EQUIPMENT

Montana schools bear the responsibility of being prepared to treat school-site injuries and to clean up body spills due to illness or injury. Montana schools should have first-aid kits and body fluid clean-up kits available to school personnel in all environments. The purpose of a first-aid kit is to deliver emergency treatment; the purpose of the body fluid clean-up kit is to clean up body fluid spills that may be created by illness or injury.

RECOMMENDED CONTENTS FOR FIRST-AID KITS

At a minimum, a first-aid kit should include:

- 2-1" x 2.5 yards adhesive tape rolls
- 24 sterilized gauze pads 3" x 3"
- 100 – ¾" x 3" adhesive bandages
- 8 – 2" bandage compress
- 10 – 3" bandage compress
- 2 – 2" x 6" sterile gauze roller bandages
- 3 sterile gauze pads 36" x 36"
- 3 sterile eye pads
- 2 non-sterile triangular bandages approximately 40" x 36" x 54" with 2 safety pins
- 1 rounded-end scissors
- 1 pair protective gloves
- 1 mouth-to-mouth airway

Source: The Eleventh National Conference on School Transportation

INFLUENZA

Flu refers to illness caused by a number of different influenza viruses. Flu can cause a range of symptoms and effects, from mild to lethal.

Annual outbreaks of the seasonal flu usually occur during the late fall through early spring. Most people have natural immunity, and a seasonal flu vaccine is available.

2009 H1N1 is a new virus first seen the United States. It is contagious and spreads from person to person. Like the seasonal flu, illness in people with H1N1 flu can vary from mild to severe.

SYMPTOMS OF FLU

Seasonal Flu

All types of flu can cause:

- Fever
- Coughing and /or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue

H1N1 Flu

Same as seasonal flu, but symptoms may be more severe

- Fever
- Cough and/or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Chills

Fatigue

In addition to the above H1N1 symptoms, a number of H1N1 flu cases reported:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

WAYS TO PREVENT GETTING THE FLU:

1. Immunizations. Check with your local doctor or health department.
2. Wash hands often with warm soapy water.
3. If unable to use soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
4. Cover your cough or sneeze. Cough into your elbow if you don't have a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it and then wash your hands.
5. Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Don't share food, drinks or eating utensils.
7. If you can, avoid being around people who are sick.
8. Stay home if you are sick so that you don't pass the flu to other people.

HOW THE FLU IS TREATED

Most people with the flu recover without complications and will not be treated with antiviral medication.

To minimize symptoms:

- Stay home
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids
- Use over-the-counter medications for symptoms such as fever-reducers (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) or decongestants

GET MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY IF YOU:

- Have difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Have purple or blue discoloration of your lips
- Are vomiting and unable to keep liquids down, or
- Show signs of dehydration, such as feeling dizzy when standing or being unable to urinate

The CDC, Center for Disease Control, recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever (100 degrees) is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol). You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN

Date

I have read Shepherd Public School's Parent/Student Transportation Handbook and understand the rules and regulations which are included.

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO YOUR CHILD'S ASSIGNED BUS DRIVER WITHIN ONE (1) WEEK AFTER THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Signature

- I would like to ride this bus if problems arise. School approval would be needed. I understand that I am strictly a parent observer.