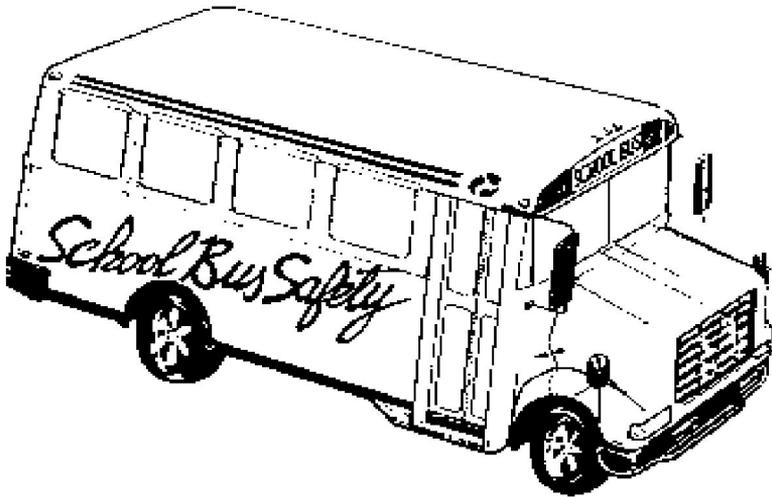




# Bus Handbook



**Transportation Department**

P.O. Box 919

Sheridan, WY 82801



## Student Bus Rider Information

**My Name is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Bus Route number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Bus Driver's name is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Bus Stop is at:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Time I get on the bus in the morning:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time I get off the bus in the afternoon:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: This handbook is written from the student reader's point of view. Parents, if you have students who don't read yet, please read this handbook with your child. Please make sure you review school bus safety with them on a regular basis.*

## **Foreword:**

In no other area of education do we accept more responsibility for student welfare than in transporting students. Safe pupil transportation requires an effort by many members of our community team. This team should include students, parents, school administrators, teachers, coaches, principals and transportation staff.

Sheridan County School District #2 is committed to safely transporting all eligible students to and from school, as well as on all other school related activities. The Board of Trustees has approved the policies and procedures for the Transportation Department. Please remember that riding a school bus in our district is a privilege, not a right.

School buses must transport large numbers of passengers in a very short period of time each school day. Rules are necessary to keep the system running safely and efficiently. These rules are purposefully kept as simple as possible, but are necessary to maintain a safe riding experience for everyone. District 2 has procedures in place to document disciplinary action when rules are broken. Every bus rule infraction has a corresponding disciplinary action defined by school administrators. The subject of bus conduct and discipline will be covered later in this handbook.

Please remember that communication is necessary to provide the best service possible. If you have concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to call us. The earlier we are aware of any transportation related problem, the more effectively we can all work together to reach a solution. Transportation personnel take their job very seriously and realize the awesome responsibility they have when they transport your children. We give you our commitment to fulfill our obligation to the best of our abilities.

## **General Safety Information and Guidelines**

Maximum seating capacity for elementary age students is three per seat. Maximum recommended seating for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and older students is two per seat.

As mandated by Wyoming State regulations, two evacuation drills will be practiced on every route bus each year. These are typically accomplished at the student's school when they are dropped off in the morning. On these mornings you may be a little late getting to your school.

Harassment or bullying issues, especially student to student, will be monitored and dealt with swiftly. Students' rights dictate a respectable bus ride, but these difficult issues require good communication. If you become involved in such an issue, please call your school or the Transportation Department immediately with your concerns.

Never chase after a bus to try and catch it. We are extremely concerned that you may fall and be run over by a moving bus.

You should do the following if you have missed your bus; either return inside the school or go home and make the necessary calls to arrange alternate transportation.

Once inside the bus, you are to proceed directly to your seat and be seated so all students may get onto the bus in a timely manner. Students will not be allowed to get on or off the bus at schools other than their own, without prior approval.

You should stay 10 feet away from the bus until it is stopped and safe to get on the bus.

When it is necessary to cross a street to or from your bus stop to get on or off your bus, **wait for the driver to motion you across the street when it is safe. Always cross the street in front of the bus, so the driver can make sure you are safe.**

Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb. Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing. Never bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes, or to pick up dropped objects. The driver may not see you before starting to move.

### Seat belts in buses

Our larger buses do not have seat belts. Safety in these buses is based on the concept of "compartmentalization". According to this concept, you are best protected by the strength of the bus, distance between the seats and padding in the seats and surrounding area. Statistical data suggests the compartmentalization approach has been a very effective alternative to seat belt use.

Smaller buses do have student seat belts. The main difference is the lighter bus chassis which makes it more vulnerable to damage. Students are required to wear seat belts on a bus so equipped and loss of bus privileges may result if students refuse to do so.

## **Bus Stop Guidelines**

Board the school bus at the closest bus stop to your home address. Bus drivers are committed to being on time at assigned stops both morning and afternoon. A good rule of thumb is to be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled route time shown for your stop. If you are late, the bus can't wait and must continue on the route. When a bus driver has to wait a minute or two extra at each stop, it makes the rest of the bus stop times late. If this were to happen, it would be difficult to stay on our route schedule and get you to school on time. We know there are exceptions we must make during extreme weather conditions in the winter months.

Notes signed by a parent, guardian or teacher are required if you are going to a different stop than previously assigned. This note should be filled out legibly listing your name, the date, destination and a phone number where your parent, guardian or teacher can be reached. If this change is to be effective on a regular basis, please write the note so it covers that range of dates. This is to assure parents or guardians that students are where they are expected to be when the bus drops them off after school. Concern for your safety is the primary reason for requiring notes when plans change. We also need current contact information for every student on the bus, in the event of an emergency.

The same rules that apply inside the bus are also applicable at the bus stop when you are waiting for the bus. At the bus stop or while waiting for the bus at school sites, you need to get in line as the bus pulls up and **not** push or shove each other. Pushing and shoving can result in injury or someone getting pushed under the wheels of the bus.

**Kindergarten students** will board the regular bus stops for the morning pickup and are usually dropped off closer to the students' home in the afternoon. **If you have a Kindergarten student, always be on time to get them on the bus before school or to pick them up at the bus stop after school.** If you are unable to meet the bus, please make plans to have someone else meet them at the bus stop.

We recommend that someone is at the bus stop in the afternoon to escort each Kindergarten student home. If no one is at the bus stop when the bus arrives, our practice is to either take the child back to their school or to the bus garage, until a parent or guardian can pick them up.

If parents or guardians feel comfortable about having their kindergarten student walk home from their bus stop after school, please provide written permission to the Transportation Department.

## **Rules and Regulations**

1. Students are expected to be respectful, follow instructions and accept feedback from the driver or chaperone.
2. Guns, ammunition/explosives, knives and all other items that might be considered a weapon are prohibited.
3. Skateboards, scooters and skates will not be allowed, unless they are carried inside a bag and not taken out during the bus ride. Animals are not allowed on the bus.
4. Stay seated, face forward and keep aisle clear.
5. Keep all body parts inside the bus at all times.
6. Tobacco products, alcohol and drugs are prohibited on the bus and at bus stops.
7. Talk quietly - foul language and unruly behavior is not permitted.
8. Vandalism to the bus will be paid for by the student causing the damage. All trash will be placed in waste containers provided.
9. Bullying and harassment of other students will not be tolerated.
10. Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
11. Food, drink and the use of portable electronic devices are not recommended but if used, cannot be distracting to drivers or others and all content must be school appropriate.

## **Student Discipline Process**

If you fail to follow the rules, be respectful, follow instructions and accept feedback from the driver or chaperone, you can lose your bus privileges. The “Bus Conduct Report” has been set up as a means to document rule infractions and to keep parents or guardians informed. These reports are filled out by the bus driver and turned in at your school’s office. No specific number has been set as to how many reports you may receive. The principal or discipline officer will determine the course of action to be taken. This will involve communication with parents or guardians to provide information related to your negative bus behavior. Depending on the type of infraction, a conference may be held to relay the course of disciplinary action. After the disciplinary action has been determined, the form will be sent to a parent or guardian, a copy retained for the student’s school file and copies are routed back to the Transportation Department.

The formal procedures involve a warning, one (1) day suspension, three (3) day suspension, five (5) day suspension, ten (10) day suspension and full loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the quarter or school year. Any step may be skipped or repeated if the student’s behavior dictates such a course of action. Riding the bus is a privilege. Any student recommended for suspended bus privileges shall be afforded an opportunity to present their version of the charges against them. Remember, a bus driver's primary job is to watch the road and drive the bus, so it is absolutely necessary they are not distracted by negative student behavior.

### **Potential Measures Prior to Formal Bus Conduct Report**

- Verbal warning by bus driver
- Pulling bus over to regain control of group

- Phone call to parents or guardians by bus driver
- AM/FM radio turned off
- Eating privileges may be taken away
- Seating may be assigned for one or all

**Any behavior that is disruptive to the safety and/or positive environment on the bus may be dealt with by disciplinary measures.**

Violations Resulting in an Automatic Loss of Your Bus Privileges

- Profanity directed at the driver or students.
- Possession of weapons; guns, knives, explosives, etc.
- Fighting; generally both students involved.
- Bullying or harassment of other students.
- Lighting fires on the bus.
- Possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco on the bus.

It may be necessary to have you removed from the bus by law enforcement personnel. If you have lost your bus riding privileges, access to board the bus will be denied, with the assistance of law enforcement personnel, if necessary.

You may be refused bus transportation when infractions occur while still at school and you are waiting to board the bus. If you are involved in one of the serious infractions listed above while in-route on the bus, you may be removed from the bus at the point where the violation occurred by a Principal, Transportation Department personnel, or Law Enforcement official. All other bus drops will occur at assigned stops for students.

You or your parents will pay for any damage you cause to a bus. Seat vandalism will be a \$50 fine plus cost of repair to

that seat or seat(s). Violations that involve city, county, or state codes will also be pursued through legal channels.

### Reinstatement

If you have lost bus privileges, you must wait until the bus suspension period has ended before you resume riding your bus.

**During the suspension period, you are banned from riding any other route bus to or from school.**

### Wyoming Department of Education Involvement

The State of Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) has direct involvement in local district busing policies around the state. The WDE has established minimum standards for school buses and rules of operation. These laws and rules of operation include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The service door of the school bus shall remain closed at all times the vehicle is in motion.
2. School buses shall operate with lighted headlamps at all times the vehicle is in motion.
3. Operators of school buses equipped with seat belts shall wear a properly secured seat belt at all times the vehicle is in motion.
4. Loading lights will be used anytime students are boarding or departing from a school bus. This includes while on activity or field trips in parking lots at hotels and restaurants. The exception for using loading lights will be made for Sheridan public schools in off street loading zones.

## **Driver Requirements and Training**

Drivers must obtain and maintain a CDL (Commercial Drivers License). Along with this requirement, every driver is fingerprinted and must submit to an extensive background check prior to being hired. They must also have a DOT (Department of Transportation) physical every other year and they are subject to initial and random drug testing. Each year all drivers' records are checked to verify that they do not have serious traffic violations that could pose a safety hazard. The WDE requires that bus drivers receive a minimum of 6 hours of annual training in driving skills and student discipline training on the school bus.

## **Snow Day Procedures**

**Special morning route procedures** will be implemented on days when there has been excessive snowfall or other extreme weather conditions.

This is a multi-tier system:

1. Delayed busing - schools open as scheduled, but selected rural routes run two hours late; listen for radio announcements.
2. All routes are delayed for two or more hours, so snow plows will have a chance to clear snow off the roads; listen for radio announcements.
3. Selected route cancellations - schools open as usual, but selected rural routes canceled; parents may transport

students but are encouraged not to; listen for radio announcements.

4. Selected school closures - routes servicing those schools will be canceled; listen for radio announcements.
5. All schools closed - all routes canceled. Listen to the radio for announcements.

The decision will be announced on the radio station as close to 6:00 A.M. as possible. Stay tuned to local radio station KROE (930 AM) and KOTA TV (Rapid City) for the latest news about bus route schedule delays or school closures.

**An early release** may also be necessary on some days due to extreme weather conditions. These schedule variations will also be announced over local radio stations.

### **Activity and Field Trips**

All rules that apply for riding route buses, also apply when you travel on school sanctioned activity or field trips.

In addition to the basic rules though, special considerations should be made when you travel on longer trips. These considerations should include packing heavier clothes, shoes and blankets to keep warm in case the bus is disabled in cold weather. Along with preparations for outer wear, you may wish to pack snacks, water and cell phones in case of an emergency situation.

When you are on an activity or field trip, please pick up after yourself. Trash receptacles are provided on all buses.

Ultimately, the Transportation Department is in charge on the trip. If a decision about driving conditions or bus safety related issues is made (whether or not to proceed), it will be done so by the Transportation Director and the driver in charge. The coaches, teachers and other sponsors are in charge of the group and their behavior. If they don't have control and it is affecting the safety on board the bus, the driver will take appropriate measures to make the trip safe (see Board Policy JICC).

### **A Special Note about Routes**

All routes are planned, as needed, to get students requiring transportation to and from school each day. Most of our routes change to a certain extent every year. For this reason, in late July each year, we provide The Sheridan Press with the most up to date version of the routes to publish in their annual "Back to School" special edition.

**...and with that, let's all have a safe ride to school!**

**Important Information and Contacts:**

Transportation Department Bus Garage

Located at: **1514 Brundage Lane (next to Quality Inn)**

Transportation Director..... Shawn Stevens

Assistant Transportation Director.....Jackie Jackson

Phone (307) 672-3105

FAX (307) 673-5128

e-mail: shawn.stevens@scsd2.com

Administration Offices

Superintendent .....Craig Dougherty

Secretary.....Jacee VanDyke

Phone (307) 674-7405

FAX (307) 674-5041

e-mail: Craig.Dougherty@scsd2.com

Wyoming Department of Education

State Transportation Director....Justin Arnold

Phone (307) 777-6984

**Snow Days, tune in to:**

**KROE (radio 930 AM), Bighorn Mountain Radio Network,  
or KOTA (Rapid City TV)**