

# Plentywood School District #20

## Transportation Handbook for Students and Parents



2023 – 2024

## **Introduction**

Bus transportation is provided in conformance with the School Laws of Montana and directives set forth by the Board of Public Education.

All buses meet State Highway Patrol inspections and the applicable standards of Montana statutes, the Montana Board of Public Education, and the Interstate Commerce Commission.

All school bus drivers are required to meet all certifications as specified by state and federal guidelines.

Our school bus drivers believe that their most important responsibility is your child's safety. This requires that the driver's attention be on the road at all times. If the driver is distracted by a misbehaving passenger, all students are at risk. We need your cooperation and support in maintaining good bus management, which is essential in sustaining the safest environment for our children.

Transportation by Plentywood School District #20 buses is NOT mandatory. This service is provided for those rural students who wish to ride under established guidelines.

Plentywood School District offers route bus service for students residing in our district that live 3 miles or more from school or have an expected right to transportation through their Individual Education Program (IEP) or in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.

## **Route Information**

Bus routes and time schedules will be communicated to parents prior to the opening of school. Bus drivers will exchange contact information with the parents of the assigned route for communication purposes.

## **Rules and Regulations**

The following information for parents and students states the rules and regulations of the Plentywood School District #20. Non-compliance will result in a loss of riding privileges.

1. Students must ride the bus and route as assigned.
2. Students who are not on the approved route rosters will not be allowed to ride unless approved by the driver or administration in advance. This includes giving rides to students for birthday parties, to baseball park, etc.
3. Students must board and/or leave the bus only at their designated stop unless prior approval has been made with the driver or administration.
4. The school bus driver has the responsibility and the authority to maintain discipline on the bus. The driver has the authority to assign seats whenever he/she deems appropriate.

5. The riding privilege of a student may be revoked for violation of rules or for conduct which is detrimental of the safe operation of the school bus. Good conduct aboard the bus is extremely important. Nothing less will be tolerated.
6. Students should be ready at least 5 minutes before their scheduled pick up time. To ensure that the route stays on time and students are delivered to school in a proper time in the morning, bus drivers will depart after 2 minutes of the scheduled pick up time if the student does not appear.
7. The school route buses depart after school exactly 7 minutes after the final bell. Students are expected to promptly gather their materials and load the bus after the final bell so that they don't miss the bus. Parents will have to pick up their child if they miss the bus.
8. Students waiting to board the bus need to stay a safe distance away from the bus (10 feet from the bus) and do not board until the bus has come to a complete stop and the door is opened.
9. Do not cross a roadway to get to the bus until all traffic has stopped and the red flashing lights on the bus are operating.
10. Always cross in front of the bus after looking both ways for traffic.
11. Do not run towards the bus to get on more quickly.
12. Go directly home after departing the bus after school.
13. Student conversations while riding the bus should be kept at a low volume. No shouting or loud talking should occur which could distract the driver.
14. Students should instantly obey any command from the driver.
15. Drivers should be able to see you at all times.
16. After school, students are expected to be ready with their belongings to exit promptly when arriving at their designated stop.
17. Students are expected to treat other students with kindness and refrain from any behavior that makes other students uncomfortable.
18. Students are to always be seated when the bus is in motion.
19. Students are required to wear seat belts on buses that are equipped with them at all times. Students should not lay down in buses that have seat belts as this is not the proper way to be belted in safely.
20. Students are expected to keep all parts of their body inside the bus.
21. Students are not to throw any objects on the bus.
22. Students are expected to clean after themselves and dispose of garbage properly.
23. Students are not allowed to adjust windows without permission from the bus driver.
24. Students are not allowed to eat food or drink beverages on the bus unless permitted by the bus driver.
25. Students are not allowed to exit the bus through an emergency exit unless an emergency exists and instructions are given by the bus driver. Failure to adhere to this rule could lead to revocation of bus riding privileges.

26. In the case of an emergency and the evacuation of the bus is directed by the bus driver, students should leave their belongings on the bus, stay in a single file line, evacuate at least 30 feet from the bus and away from the hazard, and stay with the group.
27. Older bus students may be asked to assist in evacuation of younger students in the case of an emergency.
28. There is a zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing on Plentywood School District #20 buses.
29. Students are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate to the weather conditions (see School Bus Dress Code).
30. If a student does any damage to the bus, the parent will be responsible for reimbursement of repair costs.
31. All school rules and expected behavior are in effect on the bus as well as at school.

### **General Discipline Procedures**

School route bus drivers are asked to report student misbehavior on the school bus to the school principal. Generally, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. The bus driver will warn the student about their behavior for minor offenses. The driver may choose to assign the student to a specific seat if needed for a period of time they determine is necessary.
2. For major offenses and for habitual misbehavior, the bus driver will report the student's misconduct to the parent/guardian and to the school principal. A meeting may be called between the principal, the bus driver, the student, and their parent/guardian.
3. If a student's behavior or actions are deemed to be so extreme as to endanger themselves or other students, revocation of riding privileges may be imposed immediately upon safe transport to the child's drop off site and notification to the parent/guardian.
4. Revocation of riding privileges may be imposed for a pre-determined period of time or complete revocation of riding privileges may be imposed for the remainder of the school year.

### **Parental Assistance Requested**

Parental assistance is a valued asset in the transportation of school students. Instructing your child on safety and proper behavior on school buses is greatly appreciated. The following suggestions are ways in which you can assist in the safe transportation of your child:

1. Ensure that your child(ren) is ready to board the bus each morning at least 5 minutes before their scheduled pick up time. To ensure that the route stays on time and students are delivered to school in a proper time in the morning, bus drivers will depart after 2 minutes of the scheduled pick up time if the student does not appear. Have an emergency plan in case your child(ren) misses the bus in the morning.

2. Ensure that your child(ren) is appropriately dressed for weather conditions that exist or that may develop.
3. Teach and remind your child(ren) of the importance of school bus safety and proper behavior.
4. Notify not only the school but also the bus driver if your child has any special health needs.
5. To assist with the safe delivery of your child(ren), parents are asked to please remove snow from their yards and provide a "loop" for the school bus to safely turn around in and exit your yard. Bus drivers should not have to back up in drop off or pick up locations due to creating an unsafe situation.

### **School Bus Dress Code**

All students are expected to board the bus each day appropriately clothed. The school dress code is to be enforced on school buses as well, with the exception of hats/caps are allowed to be worn. In addition, during winter months it is essential that each student be prepared for the possibility of a bus becoming non-operational and/or a rapid change in weather conditions. Therefore, in addition to their regular clothing, students need to have in their possession a heavy, warm winter coat, gloves/mittens, and a cap that can be pulled down over the forehead and ears.

### **Emergency Weather Conditions**

The unpredictability and resulting dangers associated with the weather in Montana is very real. To achieve maximum safety for the children and efficiency of operation, the Superintendent and transportation supervisor is empowered to make decisions as to the emergency operation of buses, the cancellation of bus routes, and the closing of the school in accordance with his/her best judgment.

In the event that weather conditions warrant the cancellation of bus routes, please be advised that we will broadcast such announcements on the local radio station (KATQ), our school Facebook page, and through our emergency notification system.

In the event serious weather conditions develop during the school day, it may be necessary to modify school dismissal times or bus departure times. When such a situation occurs, parents will be notified through the local radio station (KATQ), our school Facebook page, and through our emergency notification system. In addition, parents are urged to formulate emergency plans for their child(ren) in the event such an emergency should develop.

School bus drivers will make every reasonable and safe effort to complete their bus routes and to pick up or drop off students at their designated stops. In the event that this should become impossible due to weather or road conditions, drivers are directed to return to school with all students who were unable to be transported to their designated stops. Upon returning to

school, parents/guardians will be notified of the situation to make alternative plans to pick up their child(ren).

Route bus drivers may also on occasion request parents to meet the bus at a main road or highway if roads to their homes for drop off or pick up are unsafe due to conditions.

### **Bus Routes and Schedules**

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall be responsible for scheduling bus transporting, including determination of routes and bus stops. Such routes are subject to approval by the county transportation committee and the Plentywood School District #20 Board of Trustees.

The purpose of bus scheduling and routing is to achieve maximum service with a minimum fleet of buses insofar as this is consistent with rendering safe and reasonable equal service to all bus students.

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

1. A school bus route shall be established with due consideration of the sum total of local conditions affecting the safety, economic soundness, and convenience of its operation, including road conditions, condition of bridges and culverts, hazardous crossings, presence of railroad tracks and arterial highways, extreme weather conditions and variations, length of route, number of families and children to be serviced, availability of turn-around points, capacity of bus, and other related factors.
2. Bus stops shall be chosen with safety in mind. Points shall be selected where motorists approaching from either direction will have a clear view of the bus for a distance of and at least 300 feet to 500 feet.
3. School loading and unloading zones are to be established and marked to provide safe and orderly loading and unloading of students.
4. While Plentywood School District #20 is vast in area, every effort is made to follow suggested bus riding time to one hour or less for each student under normal and average road conditions.
5. School bus drivers are encouraged to make recommendations in regard to establishing or changing routes.
6. Parents are to contact the Superintendent if they have a request of change in routes, stops or schedules.

The Plentywood School District #20 Board of Trustees reserve the right to change, alter, add or delete any route at such time that such changes are deemed in the best interest of the District, subject to approval by the county transportation committee.

## **Transportation of Students with Disabilities**

Transportation shall be provided as a related service when a student with a disability requires special transportation in order to benefit from special education or to have access to an appropriate education placement. Transportation is defined as:

- (a) travel to and from school and between schools;
- (b) travel in and around school buildings or to those activities which are a regular part of the student's instructional program;
- (c) specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps) if required to provide special transportation for a student with disabilities.

The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) will dictate on an individual basis when a student with a disability requires this related service. Such recommendations must be specified on the student's IEP. Only those children with disabilities who qualify for transportation as a related service under the provisions of the IDEA shall be entitled to special transportation. All other children with disabilities in the District have access to the District's regular transportation system under policies and procedures applicable to all students of the District. Utilizing the District's regular transportation service shall be viewed as a "least restrictive environment."

# ***PLENTYWOOD SCHOOLS***

## ***Handbook(s) Sign-Off***

“I have read the Plentywood School District #20 Student Handbook(s) (grade level handbook my child is in AND Co-Curricular Handbook for grades 5-12 only) for 2023-2024. I understand that the handbook(s) contains information that my child and I may need during the school year. I understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the handbook.”

Print name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

