

Bismarck Public School District #1

School Bus Rider Handbook

with Rules and Guidelines



The information contained herein serves as a general overview for all parents and students to acquaint themselves with school policies concerning transportation of students.

The Bismarck School District believes that riding the school van/bus is a privilege. Therefore, every bus rider shall abide by the rules, as set by policy, or be deprived of the privilege of riding on the school buses.

IMPORTANT reminder for STUDENTS and PARENTS/GUARDIAN:

Student transportation is an extension of the school day; any student may be suspended or expelled for behavior exhibited in any school building, school grounds, in any vehicle (which applies to school buses either belonging to the district or on contract) or affecting any school activity. Examples of conduct that might subject students to immediate suspension or expulsion for up to five days include; but are not limited to:

- Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person;
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to school property or stealing or attempting to steal school property of value;
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to private property or stealing or attempting to steal private property;
- Possessing, handling, carrying or transmitting any weapons as defined in Policy JGDAG;
- Possessing, using, transmitting or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind;
- Continued disobedience or persistent defiance of proper authority.

Severe Weather:

“It is our policy not to send the buses home before the regular hour of departure”

- To obtain the best available weather information, the Bismarck Public School System will work closely with the National Weather Services and the local law enforcement agencies. When a condition arises where impending weather conditions may affect the safety of school children, the Transportation Department will contact the above agencies to secure all information available concerning the weather conditions and may make personal spot checks on rural roads and city streets. After receipt of this information, the Superintendent will make the decision as to whether school should be called off. If school is called off, a message will be sent out by Bismarck Public Schools to parents via cell phone as well as TV and radio stations to notify them of this fact as early in the morning as possible.
- During the winter season, all parents are urged to see that their children are warmly dressed when they board the school bus. There is always the possibility that the bus could be stalled for a period of time. In this event, warm coats, caps, gloves, and snow boots could avert serious consequences. Parents of students not dressed appropriately will be contacted by the bus service and may not be allowed to ride.
- Each day that the school buses leave for their return trip under unfavorable conditions, school officials and the Harlow’s Bus Service will keep track of each vehicle by two-way radio. In this way, the approximate location of each bus can be established at any given time. Then, too, drivers have been directed to call the Bus Supervisor’s Office whenever necessary to notify us of any difficulties that would cause a change in the time schedule. Parents could help us in this matter by calling Harlow’s Bus Service whenever their children have not arrived home within a reasonable period of time beyond the usual time of arrival.

If a student creates a safety hazard or causes a discipline problem, the following steps will be taken:

1st Offense: Student rider will be given a verbal warning by the driver. Driver MUST document this 1st offense to start the process.

2nd Offense: Principal and Parents/guardian will be notified that student's behavior is not appropriate. The Principal or designee visits with the student.

3rd Offense: A conference will be held with the student, parents/guardian, Principal or designee, and Transportation representative. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange the meeting with the school. If a meeting is not held within one week of date of third offense, rider will be suspended for three days.

4th Offense: Student rider will be suspended from bus service for two weeks.

5th Offense: Student rider will be suspended from bus service for the remainder of the year.

Administration reserves the right to initiate any level of suspension based on severity of student offense.

Questions:

All general education busing questions should be handled as follows:

- First, with questions pertaining to general education bus routes:

Call **Harlow's Bus service at 224-1767**

or email them at bismarckroutes@harlowsbussales.com

(these buses have the name Harlow's on them).

- If you have not received a reply to your question, or the issue is not resolved within 48 hours of your call, then call:

Bismarck Public Schools at 323-4502

or email bpstransportation@bismarckschools.org

All Special Services and BECEP/Headstart busing questions should be handled as follows:

- Call Bismarck Public Schools, at **323-4502** or contact us by email at bpstransportation@bismarckschools.org

All student athletic/activity busing questions or comments should be handled as follows:

- Call Bismarck Public Schools, at 323-4502 or contact us by email at bpstransportation@bismarckschools.org

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The parents/guardians of all students being transported by the BPS Transportation Department should:

1. Make certain their child is ready and at the bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled bus arrival time. The bus cannot wait more than 1 minute at each stop for students.
2. **Monitoring of students** shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian until the student boards the bus at the beginning of the day as well as when students exit the bus at the end of the day. It is expected that parents/guardian will support BPS high standards of student behavior while students are on the bus and work with the Transportation Department to solve any problems.
3. **If a student will not be riding bus to or from school, please contact** Harlow's Bus Service at 224-1767 or email them at bismarck-routes@harlowsbussales.com. Or Bismarck Public Schools Transportation Department at 323-4502, or email at bpstransportation@bismarckschools.org the call may be placed any time after 6:30 A.M., email may be sent any time or after business hours. The bus driver can then be notified that the student will not be riding.
4. In the case that a student has **NOT ridden the bus to or from school for (5) five consecutive days**, School Board Policy EDD states, "It shall be the practice of Bismarck Public Schools to remove from the ridership list any student who has not ridden the bus for five or more consecutive days and whose legal guardian has not contacted the transportation department. Should the student and family wish to receive bus service in the future, they must reapply using the established procedures.
5. Z-Pass will be used when students enter and exit the school bus. The first card will be free to students. There will be a \$5 fee for each replacement. If student does not use z-pass for (3) three consecutive days, a conduct report will be issued. If student does not use cad for (5) consecutive days, a new card will be issued and parent/guardian will be billed.
6. Drivers **cannot** accept instructions for busing changes from children or parents. Parents must work through the Transportation Office at 323-4502.
7. Due to food allergies that some students may have, students are not to eat on the bus. Water **ONLY** is allowed as long as the student is responsible. Student will lose this privilege if they purposely squirt or dump their water on the bus.

- Help look after the safety and comfort of small children.
- Be alert for the prearranged danger signal from the driver.

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the School District shall require students to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards of classroom behavior. **Every** bus rider shall abide by these rules or be deprived of the right to ride the school bus.

Accidents:

- In the event of an accident, parents/guardians of all students on the bus involved will be notified. We ask that parents stay clear of accident scene so emergency authorities and BPS/Harlow's representatives can handle the situation.

Discipline:

Bus discipline concerns, contact Bismarck Public Schools at 323-4502.

Bismarck Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

- School bus drivers are a vital link in the education system. They are responsible for securing maximum transportation safety for all student riders. In order to do this they must have your support.
- **The bus drivers are in complete charge of the bus and students are expected to comply with their requests at all times.**
- The school bus is an extension of the school, and all school rules and regulations that pertain to student conduct in the schools is applicable to student conduct on a school bus.

- Use or possession of tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, striking matches, or lighting cigarette lighters are prohibited. "Tobacco products" includes any product that contains tobacco, is derived from tobacco or contains nicotine (or lobelia), that is intended for human consumption, or is likely to be consumed, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, or ingested by any other means. The term "tobacco products" includes e-cigarettes and other electronic smoking devices, but does not include any cessation product approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for use as a medical treatment to reduce and eliminate nicotine or tobacco dependence.
- Any form of harassment directed toward other students, the driver, or bus monitor is forbidden.
- Unauthorized entering or leaving a bus through the emergency exit is forbidden.
- Cell phone use by students on the school bus shall follow Bismarck Public School's policy GAMC- Staff and Student acceptable use of Technology. If rider is listening to music or playing games on cell phones, headphones/ear plugs must be used. If volume is so loud that it creates a disturbance for those around, conduct report will be filed.
- Using cell phones to take pictures on the bus is prohibited. Conduct report will be filed.
- Using cell phone to record conversation without the permission of the individual being recorded is prohibited. Conduct report will be filed.
- Riding or attempting to ride the bus during a suspension is prohibited.

After Leaving the Bus, riders will:

- Riders must walk, not run away from the bus.
- Cross the road at least 10 feet in front of the bus, but only after checking to be sure no traffic is approaching and/or receiving a signal from the driver.

8. **Parents/guardians are not allowed to enter the bus without the consent of the bus driver.**
9. Parents **must** notify the Transportation Office at least 5 days before any change of address in order to assure continuous service.
10. The only band instruments allowed on the bus are those that can be held on the students' lap.
11. No student showing need of immediate first aid will be allowed on the bus. This includes bloody noses, scrapes, etc. This must be taken care before the student enters the bus and must be tended to by parent.

Additional requirements apply for parents of Special Education students:

1. An adult must be present at the point of pick-up and drop-off each day, unless written permission to the contrary has been given by the parent.
2. If the child needs assistance boarding or leaving the bus, the parent should assist the van/bus driver or aide.
3. Parents or guardians are responsible for getting their handicapped child to the drive or curbside and for meeting the vehicle at the end of the school day at the drop-off point.
4. No student showing need of immediate first aid will be allowed on the bus. This includes bloody noses, scrapes, etc. This must be taken care before the student enters the bus and must be tended to by parent.
5. Drivers and/or monitors and aides **DO NOT** enter a student's home.

REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS

It is important for students to remember that riding the school bus is an extension of the school days rules that apply at school also apply while on the bus.

It is the driver's responsibility to enforce transportation regulations concerning students, and to maintain discipline for the safety of all aboard.

Drivers and Monitors know that the following rules have been issued for all students:

A. General, Bus riders will:

- Ride on assigned buses.
- Have their Z-Pass card available to get on and off the bus.
- Board and disembark from assigned bus at the selected destination unless written permission from parent/guardian is granted to be left off at other than the regular stop.

B. Prior to loading, the bus riders will:

- Be at the designated bus stop on time.
- Stay off the road, and conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting for the bus.
- Stay back at least ten feet from the bus and wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and proceed only after the door is opened. Walk to the side of the road facing traffic to get to the bus stop if there is no sidewalk or path.
- Be courteous, line up in an orderly single file manner and NOT rush to get on the bus. DO NOT take advantage of younger students in order to get a seat.
- When entering the bus, use the handrail and watch their step when boarding the bus.

C. While on the bus, riders will:

- Students are forbidden from throwing anything in, at, or from the vehicle.

- All bus riders shall remain seated facing forward in their assigned seats at all times. Leaving the seat or standing without permission from the driver or monitor is not allowed.
- All bus riders shall keep their head, hands, and arms inside the bus at ALL times and must keep their feet on the floor.
- Scuffling, fighting, horseplay or goofing around is not permitted in or around the school bus.
- Obscene language or gestures is not permitted in or around the school bus as well as towards other pedestrians or vehicles.
- **Food is not allowed on the bus** and the eating of peanuts or sunflower seeds are prohibited on the bus.
- Student riders shall not litter the bus with garbage or other debris.
- Spitting at anyone while on the bus will be subject to immediate suspension from the bus.
- School bus riders shall not tamper with the bus or any of its equipment. Damage to seats, etc., shall be paid for by the offender and riding privileges shall be suspended until damages are paid for.
- The school bus rider shall keep all books, packages, coats, and other objects out of the aisle and not leave them on the bus. Articles such as bean shooters, water pistols, laser pens, and cap guns will be taken away by the bus driver and turned over to the Transportation Department.
- Riders shall bring no animals, firearms, explosives, or anything of a dangerous or objectionable nature on the bus.
- Conversation shall be carried on quietly while on the bus except when approaching a railroad crossing when quiet must be maintained.
- School bus riders are expected to be courteous to bus drivers, monitors, chaperones, and fellow students.