

TRANSPORTATION



After Hours Emergency Line

1-844-773-2773

PARENT HANDBOOK

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OBJECTIVE

This Student Transportation Handbook was developed to assist in understanding Battle River School Division's (BRSD) busing system.

The main objective for the Battle River School Division #31 transportation system is to ensure that students are transported to and from school safely. The bus driver is responsible for the students on his/her bus and must, therefore, receive the respect, consideration and co-operation of each student. Your bus driver is required to implement the rules established by the Battle River School Board. Students riding on a school bus are under the immediate supervision and authority of the driver from the time they step onto the bus until they get off the bus. The following paragraphs highlight some of the issues that pertain to the safe transportation of students. You are urged to review these with your student(s).

PROTOCOL FOR DESIGN OF BUS ROUTES

We believe that, in an effort to provide safe, efficient and, in so far as possible, equitable bus routes, the following principles will be followed when designing routes:

1. Wherever possible, circle routes will be designed such that those students who are picked up earliest in the morning are delivered home earliest in afternoon. This provides for equitable ride times.
 - a. Example. On a circle route, if a student rides 5 minutes in the morning and 55 minutes in the afternoon, the total time on the bus is 1 hour. If a student resides half way through the run, they will ride 30 minutes in a.m. and 30 minutes in p.m. for a total time of 1 hour. If they ride 40 minutes in a.m. and 20 minutes in p.m., their ride time totals 1 hour... And so on.
2. Notwithstanding 1, above, and so long as extra mileage is either not incurred or is minimal, buses will not pass by a student without picking them up or dropping them off on the way to get to or from the circle route.
3. Exceptions to the concept of a circle route will apply under the following circumstances:
 - a. Geographical circumstances (such as a lake, river, lack of passable road, etc.) do not permit a circle to be feasible.
 - b. Severe medical situations for a student(s) where it is deemed necessary to alter the circle route in order to ensure their safety. (Medical documentation may be required.)
 - c. Where, in an effort to avoid excessive risk which includes driver distraction, we may choose to alter a circle route to address pick up/drop off locations where large numbers of students can embark or disembark in the shortest possible time. (i.e., Villages such as Edberg, Bittern Lake, Ferintosh, Strome, Lougheed, Hardisty, and subdivisions.)

4. Safety of students is the primary concern and the principles of routing noted above can be altered if deemed necessary by the transportation department.
5. Parents/guardians should be prepared for changes in buses, routes, stops and times of pick-up throughout the school year that result from adding or deleting students from the route. Overall travel time will vary from route to route depending on school and student home locations.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

1. In order to be eligible for transportation, a student must live further than 2.4 kms from their designated School. Ineligible students may be accommodated if there are certain safety risks that apply such as the posted speed of the roadway.
2. Eligible students (those who live further than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school), will be served first at no cost; those students who were registered in a Battle River School Division School last year and were eligible for bussing will be planned for again this year.

NON-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

1. In the City of Camrose or for those rural students who have met the criteria of the board, non-eligible students (those who live closer than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school) will be served on a first come - first served basis, for an annual fee that is established annually by the Board of Trustees.
2. Registration for bussing of non-eligible students will be confirmed upon receipt of the applicable fee.

ECS AND GRADE 1 STUDENTS

The concern with our youngest riders is the safety of the child before the bus arrives and after the bus drops these children off.

1. Please ensure your child's safety while getting to and from the bus pick up/drop off points.
2. Once the child exits the bus, the driver can no longer be responsible for the safety of the child.
3. Parents are required to have a responsible person at the stop to meet the child when dropped off. We have had incidents where students have wandered off in the wrong direction from their drop off point as there was no one there to meet them.

STARTING TRANSPORTATION

All students must be registered for school bus service by contacting the Transportation Department at 780-672-6131, Option 1.

Grade Advancement

1. For **rural busing**, if you are already registered with the Transportation Department and your child will continue at your designated school, your student will be automatically grade advanced each year.
2. For **city busing**, all eligible and non-eligible students will need to visit the transportation department and a bus pass will be provided. For non-eligible riders transportation may commence when payment of the associated fee has been received.

Pick-up times

1. For **rural busing**, At the start of the school year, the driver will contact each family and inform them of their morning pick-up times. The bus routes will be reviewed for efficiencies throughout the month of September. The pick-up times will be finalized by the drivers as soon as possible. However, adjustments can occur throughout the year if there are changes in the route or riders. The driver will notify the parents of any changes to the pick-up times.
2. Pick-up times are established by the drivers. Each year bus routes change slightly. The drivers determine a pick-up time based on their knowledge of the roads in your area and the required arrival time established at the schools.

Late for the assigned pick-up

Students are expected to be at the stop, ready to board the bus 3 to 5 minutes before their assigned pick-up time. The time given to you by your driver is a “departure” time. It is the time the driver will leave your driveway. If your students are late, you must have a contingency plan to get them to school. If everyone on the bus were late by even one minute the bus would arrive at school approximately 30 minutes late. Please be on time.

Drop-off times

Generally speaking, drop-off times need to be flexible. The routes may be shortened due to student absences in the afternoon. This may result in your student arriving home early. Make arrangements or establish a contingency plan for this situation.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

School attendance boundaries are established by the Board of Trustees.

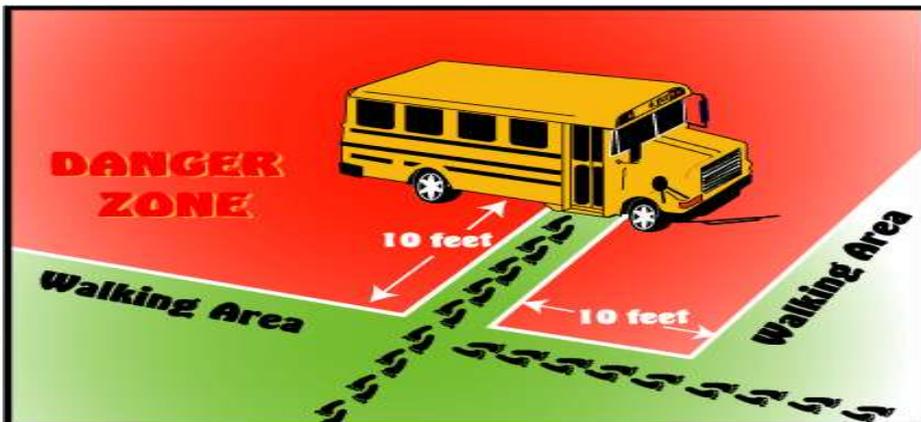
School of Choice

1. If a family decides to enroll their children at a school other than the BRSD designated school, the Board is not required to provide transportation for the student to the school of choice.
2. Students can still access Battle River School Division buses, however, the following will apply:
 - a. The student must be accepted at their school of choice.
 - b. They must meet the school bus at a safe location within the attendance area for the chosen school.
 - c. There must be room on the bus.
 - d. Application for cross-boundary transportation must be made each year.

SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING

The most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the school bus. The loading and unloading area is called the “Danger Zone”.

The “Danger Zone” is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (ten feet in front, ten feet on either side of the bus, and ten feet behind are all areas where a child may be in the driver’s blind spot). It only takes a second to lose sight of a student if a driver becomes distracted by students on board the bus.



When training our bus drivers we stress the importance of safe loading and unloading procedures. This is the time when our drivers need to be fully focused and cannot be distracted by students or parents.

It is important that parents understand that drivers need their cooperation to be fully focused at this time, by not parking and staying away from the loading and unloading zones. Please park well away from loading zones at all times.

It is also important to instruct students in the proper procedure for loading and unloading.

1. Be cautious when carrying loose papers or books which might drop near the bus.
2. Be aware of the dangers of clothing, book bag, backpack, and jacket strings/straps that could become entangled in the doorway of the school bus.
3. Wait in an orderly fashion safely back from roadway or pick-up zone. Students need to be at their stop three to five minutes early. The time you have been given for pick-up is the time the bus departs from your stop.
4. Board the bus in single file; use the handrail so you don't trip on the steps.
5. Sit down right away, so you don't fall when the bus starts moving.
6. Sit back in your seat, face forward and keep your feet to the front.
7. Keep the aisle clear of feet, backpacks, books, etc.
8. Talk quietly in order that you do not distract the driver.
9. Keep your head, arms, and hands inside the bus, not out the window.
10. Never throw things in the bus or out the window.
11. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the doors to open before you leave your seat.
12. After leaving the bus, take several giant steps away from the bus so you are out of the Danger Zone and in a safe spot.
13. If you need to cross in front of the bus make sure you look at the driver for a signal that it is okay for you to cross the roadway.

THE FAMILY PET

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that the family pet is kept away and clear of where the bus pulls up to load students.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR ON BUS

The safety of students is contingent, in large part, upon student behavior. It is necessary to establish general rules and expectations of behavior on the bus and to enforce those rules in the interests of the safety of students. The school bus is considered an extension of the classroom and, therefore, classroom conduct is to be observed at all times. The bus driver is in full charge of the bus at all times. Students are accountable for their behavior on the bus. Passengers must obey the driver promptly and in a courteous manner. When a student's behavior is unacceptable or rules have been disobeyed, the driver will file a misconduct report with the school administrator. The administrator will investigate the incident and take appropriate actions.

1. Noise is to be kept to an acceptable level. Shouting, fighting, harassment and/or disorderly conduct by students will not be tolerated.
2. Students shall not stand, change seats, or move about the bus while the bus is in motion.
3. Students shall not extend any object or arms or head out of the bus windows.
4. Garbage must be placed in a receptacle designated by the driver or packed off the bus with the student. No garbage shall be thrown on the floor or out of the windows of the bus. Do not dispose of your garbage while the bus is in motion.
5. Drivers have the ability to determine whether or not eating or drinking will be permitted on board the bus. Students are to adhere to the driver's directions in this regard.
6. Profane language will not be tolerated. Students shall not engage in behavior that may be deemed vulgar, abusive and/or that which constitutes harassment.
7. The use or possession of intoxicants/other controlled substances is prohibited.
8. Smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not permitted on the bus.
9. Students must not distract the driver.

SEAT ASSIGNMENT

The driver shall develop a seating plan and each student shall sit in the assigned seat.

1. Students have the responsibility of readily accepting the seat specifically assigned by the driver.
2. Students will sit in their assigned seat at all times unless authorized by the driver.

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

1. Students are permitted to play an electronic device that plays sound so long as earphones are used.
2. Any device that is operated with the use of earphones shall be operated at a level that ensures that the sound does not affect other passengers nor interfere with the driver's ability to communicate with the students on the bus.
3. Any of this type of equipment is under the immediate control of the driver.

PERSONAL ITEMS BROUGHT ONTO THE BUS BY STUDENTS

The size and number of personal items brought onto buses is a growing concern for our transportation system. In order to ensure safety of students, the following will apply.

1. Skates are permitted on school buses only if the blades are protected by blade guards or they are carried in a tote bag and placed under the student's seat.
2. Skis, snowboards, and skate boards are not allowed on buses.
3. Any item that cannot fit under the seats is not allowed on buses.
4. Curling brooms and hockey sticks are permitted on buses only if they can be wedged and secured in a fashion that they cannot be dislodged when the brakes of the bus are applied.
5. Band instruments may be carried on the bus only if they will fit under the bus seats.
6. Large duffle bags and backpacks can be carried on the bus only if they can easily fit under the bus seats. The ease of storage for these items must be a consideration as bus routes cannot be delayed by the effort to safely stow these large articles.
7. Because the safety of students is our main concern, parents must be aware that knives of any type are not permitted on school buses. This includes jackknives that are quite commonplace in our society. If a student requires a knife to eat lunch, the student should check at the staff room of the school for the item required.
8. Certain items are prohibited on school buses by board policy as follows:
9. Provincial Regulations stipulate that no person shall, while transporting pupils on a school bus, convey in or on the school bus
 - a. Animals,
 - b. Firearms,

- c. Explosives,
 - d. Flammable materials or substances,
 - e. Fuel other than in the fuel system and fuel tank of the bus, or
 - f. Anything of a dangerous or objectionable nature, or
 - g. Anything that may endanger the lives or safety of persons in the bus.
10. Drivers have been directed to enforce the above rules regarding the student's carry-on items.
11. Students attempting to board the bus with an article that does not conform with the above will be required to leave the item behind or may be turned away from boarding the bus with the item.

STUDENTS RIDING IN PRIVATE VEHICLES

Once students have boarded a school bus at their residence, it is expected that they shall stay on Battle River School Division buses until they are delivered to their destination school.

1. If students are disembarking and boarding a private vehicle for a portion of the trip to school, an appropriate waiver must be signed by the student's parent(s) authorizing this alternative mode of transportation.
2. Similarly, in the afternoon, once students have boarded a Battle River bus, they are to remain on a Battle River bus until they are delivered to their residence.
3. Students cannot transfer from a bus to a private vehicle without a waiver signed by the parent. These waiver(s) can be obtained from either the school or division office.

PROPER WINTER ATTIRE

All students riding on a school bus during the winter months shall be required to be prepared for unexpected severe weather conditions.

1. The student shall carry with them appropriate winter footwear, outerwear, headwear and gloves/mitts.
2. Bus drivers are to use their discretion in determining the suitability of the student's clothing for the weather conditions.
3. If a student presents him/herself at a morning pick-up and is not properly dressed, the bus driver shall pick up the student and, upon arrival at the school, the driver will complete a misconduct report identifying the problem and submit it to the school principal for follow-up action through contact with the parent.

4. If the co-operation of the student is not received, school bus transportation may be suspended.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In cases of extreme weather and unsafe road conditions there may be a need to cancel bus service.

1. The bus driver will communicate their assessment of the situation to the principal of the local school and the principal and the driver shall reach a decision as to whether all bus routes, specific routes and/or portions of specific routes should operate for that day.
2. If this were to happen you would be contacted by either your bus driver, fan out, or the transportation's automatic phone out system. You can also access this information by checking the website www.brsd.ab.ca.
3. If the school needs to send students home early due to extreme weather/unsafe road conditions during the school day, the bus drivers are to communicate their assessment of the situation to the principal.
 - a. The principal and the drivers shall reach a decision as to whether or not bused students will be sent home early.
 - b. You will receive a phone call from the school advising you that your student will be delivered home early.
 - c. Students shall not leave the school before a safe place for the student is established and that this information is communicated to the parents/emergency contact.
 - d. Parents can view route cancellations by checking the website.

EMERGENCY PHONE FAN OUT

An emergency phone fan out is necessary to respond to unexpected interruptions in bus service.

1. If the event involves a mechanical breakdown, cancellation of a portion or all of a bus route due to weather, or an emergency situation while on route, transportation personnel will initiate an automated phone fan out.

VIDEO CAMERAS ON BUSES

The board believes that the use of video cameras on school buses will help protect the safety of passengers, prevent vandalism, and be a useful resource for school administrators when dealing with student discipline matters.

1. Video monitoring of buses can either be conducted on a random basis or on selected routes at the discretion of the Director of Transportation.

2. In accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Section 32, videotapes can only be viewed by the Director of Transportation, Division Personnel, School Administrator, and Bus Driver when there is a problem during a bus trip or when there is suspicion of inappropriate behavior.
3. Parents will not have access to the videotapes unless it can be assured that the privacy of other students on the bus is protected, or unless permission from all parties is secured.

CONTACT THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Battle River School Division #31

6211 – 48 Avenue

Camrose, Alberta

T4V 0K4

Office hours; 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. (closed between 12:00pm – 1:00pm)

1-800-262-4869, 780-672-6131

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