



**2023-2024**

**Transportation**

**Handbook**

for

**K-12 Students & Parents/Guardians**



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## Table of Content

Introduction	Page 2
Mission Statement	Page 2
General Procedure	Page 2
StopFinder Parent APP	Page 3
New Students	Page 3
Transitional Housing or Homelessness	Page 3
Route Change	Page 3
Inclement Weather	Page 4
Student Illness/Accident while on the bus	Page 5
Regular Routes	Page 5
Bus Safety	Page 5
Musical Instruments and other items	Page 6
Riding the school bus	Page 7
Discipline	Page 7
Destruction of Property	Page 8
Weapons	Page 8
Disciplinary Steps	Page 8
Seatbelt Board Policy	Page 9
District Operations During a Public Health Emergency	Page 10
Use of Recording Devices on School Buses	Page 11
District Discrimination Statement	Page 11

## **Introduction**

This handbook is an informational guide for students and parents. It outlines the basic policies, rules, and regulations governing student transportation.

## **Mission Statement**

The Safe and Efficient Transportation of All Eligible Riders.

For us to meet our mission requires several things:

- Safe and efficient buses
- Safe and courteous bus drivers
- Policies, procedures, regulations and rules
- Parent support and cooperation

In addition to the above, and just as important, we must have good order and discipline on the buses. To achieve this, we have rules that students must adhere to. We also have policies and procedures to deal with students who violate the rules.

## **General Procedures**

Request for Transportation Form

Parents requesting transportation for their children must meet certain requirements. The requirements are found under Board Policy 711.1-R Title: Student Eligibility for Bus service.

- **Elementary and Middle school students living more than two miles from their designated school attendance centers**
- **High school students living more than three miles from their designated attendance center**
- **Are entitled to transportation to and from their attendance center at the expense of the school district**
- **Consideration for individuals living within the walk zone areas will be based on:**
  - **Lack of sidewalks *AND***
  - **Posted speed of a street to be crossed is 30 miles per hour or greater**
- **Transportation to and from daycare will be provided if the student qualifies from their primary home address**

**Transportation request forms are provided with the online registration.**

- Requests for transportation can be completed online anytime and submitted to the Transportation Department.
- Requests for transportation forms are to be filled out by the parent or guardian at the time registration is completed.
- The Director of Transportation will determine if the request meets one of the requirements listed above.
- Around the 1st of August or before, letters will be sent out to parents informing them if their child is eligible or not. If the student is eligible, bus information will be provided with approximate pick-up times as well as stop location and bus number.

## **StopFinder Parent APP**

Marshalltown Community School District provides parents free access to the StopFinder Parent App to help parents and students receive alerts and track the location of their bus. Invites are sent to parents with an active email to download the app. If you have yet to receive an invite, email the Transportation Department or call 641-754-1195. To learn more about the StopFinder Parent APP, please visit the website <https://stopfinder.com/> and click on Parent.

## **NEW STUDENTS**

When a family has registered their student for school, the building secretary will notify the Transportation Department of the request for busing. When eligibility is determined, the school secretary or transportation department will notify the parent. If the student is eligible, the parent will be given a pick-up and drop-off time, bus number, and location to meet the bus. If the student is not eligible, the parent will be given the reason why. If there are any questions after eligibility is established, the parent can contact the transportation department at 641-754-1195.

## **Students in Transitional Housing or Homelessness**

The McKinney-Vento Act is federal legislation to support children and youth experiencing homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act defines children and youth who are homeless as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The Act ensures homeless children and youth enroll and succeed in school. Students in the following situation(s) may be entitled to additional supports and services:

- Living in hotels, motels, cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations.
- Living in transitional housing, emergency or domestic violence shelters.
- Doubled up with other families or relatives due to loss of housing or affordable housing.
- Living without the support or in the physical custody of parents/guardians.

**A student who is identified as homeless or in transitional housing is eligible for busing for one calendar year after being identified.** To access services, please speak with the school counselor or school resource specialist. If they are unavailable, please contact the McKinney-Vento Family Support Liaison, Eric Goslinga, at 641-752-0039.

## **ROUTE CHANGES**

New Routes/ Route changes. Occasionally we must make changes to routes, pick-up/drop-off times, or pick-up/ drop-off locations. If we make significant changes, we will notify parents/guardians by letter, phone, email, StopFinder Parent App and Transfinder Routing notification.

## **Road Conditions:**

- To provide safe and timely service, bus routes will not travel short dead-end roads, cul-de-sacs, or driveways. Exceptions to normal pick-up/drop-off locations will be considered on a case-by-case basis dependent on student age, safety, and/or road conditions.
- When transportation officials determine a road to be unsafe or causing undue wear and tear on the bus, the Transportation Office will contact the agency responsible for the necessary repairs.
- If the road is in such disrepair or unpassable as to make transporting students unsafe and/or causing undue damage to the bus, we will cease travel on the road until satisfactory improvements and/or repairs are completed.

## **TRANSPORTATION IN INCLEMENT WEATHER - Board Policy 711.8**

Marshalltown Community School District buses will not operate when weather conditions due to fog, rain, snow, or other natural elements make it unsafe to do so. Because weather conditions may vary around the school district and may change quickly, the best judgment possible will be used with the information available.

The final judgment regarding when conditions are unsafe to operate will be made by the Superintendent. The Superintendent will be assisted in making such determinations by the Director of Transportation.

### **Hard surface roads only**

In the case where the district has determined that buses will run on hard services only:

- Drivers will inform parents/ students of pick-up times. Keep in mind that your normal bus might not be the bus stopping at these stops.
- Employees and students will be notified by commercial radio and television, email, and social media when school is cancelled or delayed.
- When school is cancelled because of weather anywhere in the district, all schools will be closed.

When weather conditions deteriorate during the day after school has begun, cancellation notices will be announced by commercial radio and television, email, and social media. Students will be returned to their regular drop-off sites unless weather conditions prevent it. In that case, parents may be required to meet the bus at a predetermined area on a hard surface road or students will remain at, or returned to the school until they are picked up by the parent.

### **Iowa River flooding**

In the event the Iowa River has flooded and has closed HWY 14, 330, Sand Road, East Main Street, the buses, if able, will go to Albion by way of Stanley Mills Road and will come down from the north through Liscomb. In these cases, the buses will be in Albion by 7:20 a.m. Any students living outside of Albion will be required to meet in Albion.

## **Student illness/accident while on the bus**

Bus drivers are instructed to take prompt action to minimize the effects of an accident or illness and to provide simple first-aid as necessary. The driver will determine if an ambulance or other emergency personnel should be called. If conditions warrant, the Transportation Office will contact the parent/guardian and inform them of the situation. **To avoid delays in contacting parents/guardians, please keep the telephone contact information current with the school office.**

## **Regular Routes**

Route Assignments. When enrolling students or moving to a different address, ensure the school office has the correct street address and contact telephone number.

**Parents of elementary students moving from one neighborhood school area to another and wishing to remain in the original school shall be required to provide their own transportation. Board Policy 711.1 (page 2; last sentence)**

When a parent wants their child picked up or dropped off at a daycare, they must qualify for busing from their home address in order for this request to be honored.

Every student who rides a bus has certain obligations and responsibilities to ensure they have a safe ride and do not lose their bus riding privileges. Those obligations and responsibilities are:

### **Getting on the bus: (National Safety Council)**

- Be at the designated bus stop **5 minutes prior** to the designated pick-up time.
- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic, and avoid roughhousing or other behavior that can lead to carelessness. **Do not stray onto the street.**
- Line up away from the road as the school bus approaches.
- Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway.
- Before crossing the street, wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
- Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the roadway to make sure traffic is stopped. Watch traffic when crossing.
- Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.

### **Behavior on the bus: (National Safety Council)**

- When on the bus, find a seat and sit down. Loud talking or other noise can distract the bus driver.
- Never put your head, arms, or hands out the window.
- Keep aisles clear. Books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.
- Before you reach your stop, be prepared to leave by getting your books and belongings together.
- At your stop, wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat.

## **Getting off the bus: (National Safety Council)**

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road until you can turn around and see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver can see you, and you can see the driver. **NEVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS!**
- Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the centerline of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the rear bus wheels at all times. Do not try to get something that has dropped and gone under the bus.

We encourage parents/guardians to discuss the above obligations and responsibilities with their student(s). Any violation or disregard for the above rules or the eight expectations could result in a loss of riding privileges.

Every school in Marshalltown follows the philosophy of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS). Just as each school has PBIS expectations during the school day, similar PBIS expectations also apply when students are riding the bus. Here are the eight behaviors we expect to see of any student who rides the bus:

- Keep your hands to yourself
- Respect school property
- Respect the driver, monitor, and other riders
- Stay seated at all times
- Keep the school bus safe
- Use appropriate language (e.g., no swearing, name-calling, bullying)
- Keep objects in the bus
- Talk quietly

## **Transportation of Musical Instruments, Skateboards, balls, etc.**

Only those musical instruments which can be kept with the pupil and which do not occupy an unreasonable amount of space may be transported.

Items prohibited from route transportation are:

- Large musical instruments. (If you have questions, contact the Transportation Director)
- Skateboards
- Basketballs, soccer balls, footballs, etc. (unless secured inside a bag)
- Weapons of any kind
- Glass containers
- Food and drink (can be carried on the bus as long as it is kept in a container with a lid and not removed or consumed while riding the bus).
- Other unnecessary items as determined by driver or administration.
- CD players, electronic games, smartphones, etc. will be allowed as long as they are not a distraction to the driver. If they become a distraction to the driver, they will be required to keep them put away.

## **Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right.**

Students are required to behave on the bus; acts of physical violence will not be tolerated.

Transportation Department Discipline Procedure.

- The Transportation Department will maintain good order, discipline, and safety on the school bus. Transportation guidelines and codes of conduct are designed to foster student responsibility and respect for the rights of others and to ensure the orderly operation of the district's schools. General discipline guidelines and possible consequences are listed. These guidelines are derived from and recommended by the United States Department of Defense/Homeland Security. **Since each incident is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the disciplinary action may be determined at the discretion of the Transportation Director and/or Principal based on the age of the student.**

## **Discipline Procedures for Inappropriate Behaviors**

**Harassment:** Demonstrated verbally or physically in a pattern and continues after requests have been made to stop. Refer to Board Policy 504.14: Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances: Verbal, nonverbal, physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim.

**Disorderly Conduct:** Overt refusal to comply with a direction that directly affects student safety or disruption of the driver's ability to safely operate the vehicle.

Inappropriate Behaviors may include:

- Crawling under bus seats or jumping from seat to seat.
- Placing head, arms or any body parts out of the windows.
- Loud noises or playing loud music on the bus.
- Eating or drinking on the bus.
- Standing while the bus is moving.
- Insubordination: A willful failure to obey the driver's or monitor's instructions.
- False Emergency: Setting off the bus emergency exit door or window alarms.
- Disrespect: Responding to an adult or other student in a manner that is rude.
- Fighting: Fight is defined as mutual combat, punching or hitting between two or more individuals.
- Language: The use of profane language or the use of abusive names to belittle or humiliate another person.
- Physical Aggression: Board Policy 502.11 addresses "Violence" Rough play, roughhousing, kicking, biting, hair pulling, and spitting.
- Theft: The act of taking something from someone else without the other person's consent. Minor: 1-2 times with little personal or monetary value.
- Exposure: The act of exposing one's private parts to another.
- Illegal Substances: Tobacco/Alcohol. Possession/use of drugs: Board Policy 502.12 addresses "Smoking/Drinking/Drugs".



## **Destruction of Property: Fines Fees and Charges Board Policy 503.3**

Intentional breaking, tearing, destroying, or vandalism of physical property of buses. Misuse of the bus may include and not be limited to: damage to seats (writing, cutting, poking holes), cracking/breaking a window or mirror, and disarming any alarms on the bus. **A student who vandalizes the interior or exterior of a bus may be assessed a charge for the damage done.**

### **Weapon Possession:**

Board Policy 502.10 addresses Weapons: “Without limiting the examples or definition, the following instruments or objects generally are considered weapons within the jurisdiction of this policy: knives of any types, guns, hunting rifles, replicas of weapons, squirt guns, lead pipes, chains, nunchucks, throwing stars, metal knuckles, blackjacks, fireworks, or dangerous chemicals.”

### **Disciplinary Steps:**

There are times when some students misbehave and do not follow the expectations for riding the bus. When a student does not follow the expectations for riding the bus, there are consequences for their choices. Under the concept of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, the consequences have two different levels of severity, MINORS and MAJORS. MINOR behaviors do not significantly violate the rights of others, do not put others at risk of harm, and does not violate a School Board policy. MAJOR behaviors significantly violate the rights of others, put others at risk of harm, and/or violate a School Board policy. It is the discretion of the Transportation Director and/or Principal to decide if inappropriate behavior is considered a MINOR or MAJOR behavior.

The Transportation Director utilizes a discipline matrix to address MINOR and MAJOR behaviors. The district reserves the right to apply the level of discipline they feel is appropriate based on the incident.

#### **Founded MINOR (Transportation Director/Administrator discretion)**

- 1st offense: Warning issued, communication with the parent, reteach bus expectation.
- 2nd offense: Communication with the parent, reteach bus expectation, 1 day of bus suspension.
- 3rd offense: Communication with the parent, reteach bus expectation, 3 days of bus suspension.
- 4th offense: Will become a MAJOR: 1st Offense. Each offense beyond 4 will be documented at a MAJOR and follow the MAJOR discipline process.

#### **Founded MAJOR (Transportation Director/Administrator discretion)**

- 1st offense: 1 to 3 days of bus suspension, communication with the parent, reteach bus expectations.
- 2nd offense: 3 to 5 days of bus suspension, reteach bus expectation, communication with parent, parent meeting will be held between the principal, transportation representative, and parent/guardian prior to the child receiving bus privileges.

- 3rd offense: 5 to 10 days of bus suspension, reteach bus expectation, communication with parent, parent meeting will be held between the principal, transportation representative, and parent/guardian prior to the child receiving bus privileges.
- 4th offense: 10 to 14 days of bus suspension, reteach bus expectations, a parent meeting will be held between the principal, transportation representative, and parent/guardian prior to the child receiving bus privileges.
- 5th offense: 14 days to 9 weeks of bus suspension (45 school days), reteach bus expectations, a parent meeting will be held between the principal, transportation representative, and parent/guardian prior to the child receiving bus privileges.
- 6th offense: Bus riding privileges revoked for up to 1 school year (36 school weeks), reteach bus expectations, a parent meeting will be held between the principal, transportation representative, and parent/guardian prior to the child receiving bus privileges.

**Immediate Danger Situations** - Examples may include, but are not limited to: student(s) starting a fire, throwing an item with the potential to cause injury or damage, or fighting.

- In situations where the bus driver believes there is an immediate danger to a child or himself/herself, the driver has the right to stop the bus immediately and contact the necessary person or persons to immediately remove the child from the bus. These contacts may include but are not limited to, the Director of Transportation, building Principal, law enforcement, or parent/guardian.
- Discipline will follow the MAJOR: 2nd Offense description.

### **School Bus Passenger Restraints Board Policy: 711.10**

- It is the goal of the Marshalltown Community School District Transportation Department to provide the safest student transportation possible. Beginning in 2020-2021, the District is purchasing school buses equipped with lap/shoulder seat belts. The District requires all students riding a school district bus equipped with seat belts wear the seat belts while the bus is in motion.
- All Students will receive instruction on the proper use of the seat belts during the twice-annual bus safety drills. Drivers are not responsible (i.e. liable) for students wearing seat belts while riding. Drivers are responsible for instructing students to put on seat belts prior to the bus moving. Students who may require assistance in using seat belts should ask the bus driver for help, so that all students are safely belted in their seats before the bus is in motion. Drivers will announce prior to the bus leaving that each student needs to be in their seat with the seat belt fastened.
- Students refusing to use seat belts create a safety concern for themselves and others, and are subject to school district disciplinary action. Repeated refusal to wear seat belts can result in suspension from bus riding privileges.
- All adults accompanying students as bus riders are expected to utilize the lap/shoulder seat belts, too.

## **District Operations During a Public Health Emergency**

During a public health emergency, the district will seek guidance and recommendations from federal, state, and local agencies that monitor and respond to the emergency. The district will follow any mandatory closures or other mandatory measures imposed by such agencies. The District, in conjunction with relevant government agencies and/or athletic and activity associations, will determine under what circumstances the district will restrict or cancel in-person learning, student events, or activities, including sporting events, extracurricular clubs or meetings for students, and the use of district facilities by outside organizations.

Among the things we may require of students and employees include, but are not limited to:

- Health screening upon entry to the building
- Additional handwashing
- More frequent cleaning and sanitizing at student workspaces
- Wearing of personal protective equipment as required or recommended by proper authority
- Grouping students into a pod that stays together all day with their core teacher (and any aide or student teacher who is present), including for lunch or other breaks
- Staggering the use of communal spaces and reconfiguring bell schedules to minimize foot traffic.
- Staggering the start time and end time of the school day
- For transportation to school, limiting seating to one student per row and assigning each bus rider to a designated seat that is the same every day.
- Requiring “social distancing” or other measures as required or recommended by proper authority
- Reducing or eliminating in-person attendance, shortening the school day, or rescheduling days of school

Employees, volunteers, and students are encouraged to monitor their temperatures each morning prior to traveling to any school building or event.

Students who refuse to follow health and safety protocols during these times will be reminded and encouraged to follow health and safety protocols by staff.

### **Notice of Surveillance**

The District uses video surveillance equipment to record events and the behavior and activity of all persons on school property, including school buildings and transportation.

## **Use of Recording Devices on School Buses Board Policy 804.6 R1**

The Marshalltown Community School District Board of Directors has authorized the use of recording devices on school district buses. The recording devices will be used to monitor student behavior to maintain order on the school buses to promote and maintain a safe environment. Students and parents are hereby notified that the content of the recording may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. The content of the recording are confidential student records and will be retained with other student records. Recordings will only be retained if necessary for use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matter as determined necessary by the administration. Parents may request to view the recording of their child if the recordings are used in a disciplinary proceeding involving their child.

## **District Discrimination Statement**

It is the policy of the Marshalltown Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Dr. Nora Ryan, Director of Human Resources, 1002 S 3rd Ave, Marshalltown, IA 50158. Telephone 641-754- 1000. [nryan@marshalltown.k12.ia.us](mailto:nryan@marshalltown.k12.ia.us).

Es la política del Distrito Escolar de la Comunidad de Marshalltown no discriminar ilegalmente sobre la base de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, discapacidad, religión, creencias, edad (para el empleo), estado civil (para programas), la orientación sexual, la identidad de género y el estatus socioeconómico (para programas) en sus programas educativos y sus procedimientos de empleo. Hay un procedimiento de reivindicación para procesar quejas de discriminación. Si tiene alguna pregunta o una queja relacionada con esta política por favor, póngase en contacto con Coordinador de Equidad del distrito Dr. Nora Ryan, Director de Recursos Humanos, 1002 S 3rd Avenida, Marshalltown, IA 50158. Teléfono 641-754- 1000. [nryan@marshalltown.k12.ia.us](mailto:nryan@marshalltown.k12.ia.us)