

**Medicine Hat Catholic
Board of Education**

Transportation Handbook



August 2020

Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education Transportation Handbook

REFERENCES:

1. AP 550 Transportation of Students
2. Student Conduct on School Buses
3. Transportation FAQ's
4. Transportation Contract Clause 5.3.3

GENERAL:

1. The driver's full attention is needed to drive the school bus safely.
2. Students are to comply with the **Student Conduct on School Bus** document.
3. Parents may not remove their student during the route. Students may only be released at the designated stop.
4. Southland is not responsible for any items left on the school bus once departed.

TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Transportation Contract dated July 21, 2014 - extended July 2019

Southland Transportation Ltd.

Clause 5.3.3

The contractor shall ensure that the Drivers are trained to maintain order and discipline and use reasonable care to protect all students and others transported pursuant to this Agreement. The contractor shall ensure Drivers immediately report any problematic student behavior to school administration. The Contractor and its driving personnel shall not, at any time, discuss with the pupils any topic of school discipline or policy and will, at all times, maintain a position of impartiality.

DISCIPLINE:

1. Drivers are not to discipline students. In the event a student breaches the required conduct outlined in the Student Conduct on School Buses the driver shall:
 - a. Start with a verbal warning and record in the driver's journal the student name, the problem and the corrective action taken when safe to do so. Use a 'broken record' approach if there is recurring behavior and continue to repeat expectations without engaging in any argument or debate.
 - b. Students must provide their name to the driver when requested.
 - c. If the misconduct continues the driver may move the student to the front of the bus and record in the driver's journal the student, the problem and the corrective action taken when safe to do so.
 - d. If the misconduct continues or the issue is of a serious nature, the issue shall be reported to the school administration either verbally upon arrival or through a Southland Student Misconduct report, via email or in written form.

- e. Continue the route if safe to do so and release the student at their designated stop, report the issue to school administration, either in person or through a student management form via email from Southland dispatch.
 - f. If the misconduct is of a serious issue or results in the driver unable to continue the route in a safe manner, the driver shall stop the bus at a safe location and contact the dispatcher for assistance.
 - i. The dispatcher may elect to contact the school and request the school administration go to the bus to deal with the misconduct or have Southland Representatives go to the bus to address the misconduct.
 - ii. The driver, under no circumstances, shall return to the school during the route unless authorized by school administration.
 - iii. Under no circumstances shall a student be removed from the bus by the driver.
 - iv. Students shall only be picked up at approved stops along the route and only dropped off at the designated stop on the route.
 - g. Students shall not be grabbed or otherwise manhandled.
 - h. If the bus needs to stop for an extended period, for example during a breakdown, attempts shall be made by Southland and the school to contact the parents or guardians of the students who are delayed.
 - i. The bus driver has full discretion to set up a seating plan as they deem appropriate.
2. The school administration shall investigate all reported misconducts,
- a. The school bus is an extension of the classroom.
 - b. The discipline of the student is the responsibility of the school administration.
 - c. All reported student misconduct shall be investigated by School Administration.
 - d. As appropriate, school administration may discipline the student which may include any of the following:
 - i. Assigned seating for a period of time.
 - ii. Suspension from riding the bus from one day to the remainder of the year.
 - a. If a bus suspension is being considered in excess of 3 days the administrator shall consult with the superintendent and the secretary treasurer before issuing the suspension.
 - b. The parent will be solely responsible for transporting the student to and from school for any bus suspension with no financial recovery.
 - c. A return from suspension may be allowed if the principal is satisfied that there is assurance from the parent and the student that the required conduct will be followed.
 - iii. In-school suspension in accordance with the district policies and the *Education Act*.

- iv. Out of School suspension in accordance with the district policies and the *Education Act*.
 - v. Expulsion in accordance with district policies and the *Education Act*.
- e. Report to Southland Transportation the outcome of the investigation and any disciplinary actions taken, in a timely matter.
- f. If cameras are installed, they must be reviewed as part of the investigation.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST DRIVERS

1. All complaints against drivers shall be dealt with in the following manner
 - a. Complaints shall be in writing to either the school principal, the Division Transportation Coordinator or to Southland Transportation.
 - b. The school principal shall investigate the situation, as appropriate, including interviewing those involved and those who may have seen the incident.
 - c. Report the complaint and the result of the investigation to the Division Transportation Coordinator who will follow up with Southland Transportation and the Secretary Treasurer.
 - d. Southland Transportation shall report back to the Division Transportation Coordinator on their investigation and any actions taken or any complaints they received directly.
 - e. This is to be reported back to the principal, as appropriate.
 - f. Personal information on the driver will remain confidential and shall not be shared with the complainant.
 - g. If cameras are installed on the bus, they may be reviewed as part of the investigation.

ROUTE ISSUES:

1. Parents shall work with Southland for any route questions.
2. Issues on routes and schedules are to be reported to the Division Transportation Coordinator who shall coordinate with Southland Transportation to investigate and resolve as appropriate.
3. Route/Schedule Adjustments
 - a. Proposed adjustments to maps during the school year will be reviewed in conjunction with Southland Transportation, Division Transportation Coordinator, Secretary Treasurer and if appropriate, School Administration.
 - b. Upon approval of map route / pickup / drop off time changes. Southland Transportation will ensure updated version of map is loaded on the Southland Transportation website. Bus drivers will issue a slip to the riders asking parents to review the Southland website for route changes.
 - c. Dependent on the degree of the change, Central Office will coordinate communications to post a notice on the website and notify secretaries and school administration.

- d. Notification of the change will be sent to the secretaries and school administration. The schools will send a notification to Parents/Students via email to parents and/or a letter to the students that are affected by the changes.
- e. Parents must review the routes at the start of each school year.
- f. There may be situations where a student is not released for valid reason (Parent of a young child who is consistently present at bus stop is not there, a student reporting they lost their house key, etc.) In these situations, the driver will contact dispatch with the relevant information. Dispatch will contact the school and the school will contact the parents. In the event that the parents cannot be contacted by the end of the route, and the school administration are unable to provide assistance, police will be contacted.

PROCESS FOR OUT OF BOUNDARY STUDENTS:

Students living outside the Division boundary are not eligible for transportation. Due to safety concerns, it is not the practice of the Division to allow parents to drop their students at a location inside the Division boundary in order to receive transportation. However, if certain conditions and guidelines are followed, the Superintendent of Schools may provide permission to allow a student to be dropped off within the Division Boundary, at an approved location, for transportation. Parents may apply in writing to the Superintendent of Schools, to request an exemption. The request must contain contact information and reasons for the exemption including:

- a.) Suggested location for pickup / drop-off;
- b.) The plan which addresses specifically how the student will be kept safe in the event the school bus is delayed or cancelled in the morning;
- c.) The plan which addresses specifically how the student will be kept safe at the end of the day, if the parent is unable to be present at the school bus stop and for any other risk factors which may be relevant;
- d.) Name of student, Grade and name of school that the student will be attending;
- e.) Approvals are on an annual basis only and may be cancelled at any time.
- f.) Factors that the District may consider when reviewing the request may include:
 - a. District satisfaction with the emergency plan
 - b. Age of student
 - c. Location of the bus stop
 - d. Availability of space on the bus
 - e. Other Operational needs
- g.) If the request is approved, Parents will be required to sign an agreement outlining the conditions prior to commencing the arrangement.
- h.) The arrangement is for the current year and parents must reapply annually.

*Please refer to FORM – AP550

PROCEDURES FOR BUS ACCIDENTS / INCIDENTS:

1. Whenever school buses are involved in accidents, the immediate welfare of the students and others on the bus is primary. School bus accident procedures shall be flexible due to the variability of accident situations.
2. In the case of a bus accident, the bus driver calls Southland Transportation to report the accident. The bus driver will check for injuries and administer or arrange for first aid as quickly as possible. Student needs are primary.
3. The driver / Southland Transportation will call for an ambulance or police as required.
4. A representative from Southland Transportation will go to the site to assess the situation and gather a list of the students who are on the bus and if possible a passenger seating arrangement.
5. Southland Transportation will notify the Principal / Vice-Principal of the school and also the Transportation Department at Central Office to notify them of the situation.
6. A Southland representative will take a list of the students who are on the bus and email the list of the names to the school administration. School administration will call the parents / guardians of the students notifying them of the situation. Southland Transportation will send a replacement bus to take the remainder of the students on the rest of the route to school or home. Parents will not be able to pick up their children, as they cannot be released to anyone, unless a School Board, Police, Ambulance or Fire Official takes responsibility for that child.

Please note, these actions are dependent on the degree and the severity of the bus accident and may need to be adjusted as needed.

An accident report is completed by Southland Transportation and is forwarded to the Transportation Coordinator at MHCBE.

INCLEMENT WEATHER – BUS CANCELLATION/SCHOOL CLOSURE

1. Southland will assess the situation at 5:30 AM. Bus route service may be cancelled for the day if Southland determines that the heavy snowfall overnight and/or ice on the road is detrimental to safe school bus travel.
2. Temperature and wind-chill in of themselves are not criteria Southland will use for the decision to cancel bus route service for the day. Announcements about bus cancellation are communicated by Southland Transportation on local radio stations. MHCBE will notify parents/guardians via the emergency messaging app via email, text messaging and voice messaging as well as on social media.
3. Please ensure children are dressed warm and appropriate for inclement weather and that alternative arrangements are made in place in the event school buses are not running.
4. Schools will only be closed when the Medicine Hat Police Service advises no travel on city streets.

COVID 19 GUIDELINES

1. Drivers must wear appropriate PPE. Face masks to be worn and supplemented with a face shield when students are loading and unloading.
2. All students are required to wear a masks while loading, unloading and riding the bus.
3. Upon loading the bus, all students must sanitize their hands using the hand sanitizer provided by the driver and must sanitize upon leaving the bus as well.
4. All busses will be disinfected at the end of the morning and afternoon runs. For bus services of two or more schools, high touch surfaces will be sanitized between schools.
5. When the outside temperature is below 0, any student who is riding the bus and is not wearing gloves/mittens, must sanitize their hands upon entry onto the school bus. Sanitizer will be provided to the student by the bus driver.
6. Any student who is not wearing mittens/gloves is not required to sanitize their hands providing the mittens/gloves remain on the student's hands for the entire duration of the ride.
7. All students must remove their mittens/gloves upon entry into the school and sanitize their hands as per regular protocol.