

Dear Parents,

We are working hard to have everything ready for an in-person start to the school year. One of the challenges we face is keeping students and drivers safe while on the school buses during this pandemic. Social distancing is difficult, if not impossible, to do on our routes. Most buses will now have seat belts that we are required to use by Iowa law. We are asking for your help with some measures related to transportation.

1. If you are able to transport your children to school, instead of riding the bus, please do so. This will help us limit the number of students on each bus and create more space during transportation. If you are able to do this please let Jill Gavin, jill_gavin@mstm.us know as soon as possible.
2. Masks will be required for students and bus drivers while on the bus. Please provide a mask daily for your child. If you do not have a mask please let us know and one will be provided.
3. The bus will be loaded from the back to the front upon pick-up, and students will then exit from the front to the back.
4. Seats will be assigned with family groups together. These assigned seats will remain the same throughout the year.

SEAT BELTS

Most of our buses will have seat belts. All new buses will now come with seat belts per state law, and some of our older buses are being retrofitted with seats that have seat belts. All students will be required to wear the seat belt when riding a bus that has them. We know there are concerns, so we would like to address our plan with you.

The transportation department will do additional training with the students to ensure everyone is able to operate the seat belts. We will send out a message so that you know your student will be running late, if done after school. We plan on doing the training at the school. The training will be a look at the safety features on the bus as well as a mock evacuation drill. We want to make sure students are comfortable with new procedures. Additionally, we want to see which students can easily release the belts and which students struggle. The students that struggle will then be assisted by an older student, preferably a sibling, who will help them in case of an actual evacuation. All students will have assigned seats as the seat belts will need to be adjusted for proper fit. This way there should only be small adjustments necessary for coats, snow pants, and winter gear.

Wearing seat belts is a required safety measure and will be enforced. That means that they are not optional. Students who refuse to wear a seat belt or keep their seat belts will not be allowed to ride the bus.

We know this will be quite the change for your student as well as for the driver. We will work through the learning curve together. Please also remind your students that the basic housekeeping rules continue on the bus: no eating on the bus, no gum, candy or snacks. No drinks on the bus other than water.

ROUTES

Bus Routes will not be changing for the 2020-2021 school year. However, we will not refer to them by the drivers' names or bus numbers as these could change throughout the school year. From now on, routes will be referred to by letter names as detailed below.

Former Route Bus Driver New Route Name

Route 2 Brian Sweet Route A

Route 1 Gary Hart Route B

Route 5 Carol Banks Route C

Route 7 Ray Gavin Route D

Route 6 Wade Gibson/Richard Bown Route E

Route 3 Andrew Overton/Jayne Sherwood Route F

The letters for these routes will be sprayed painted on the sidewalk in front of where the buses will be parked in the afternoon.

TRANSPORTATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Bus driver contact information will be released to you prior to the school year starting.

Elementary Bus Updates - Please contact Jesscia Hart with bus questions, updates, changes, or concerns at 641-764-2621 or jessica_hart@mstm.us.

Secondary Bus Updates - Please contact Christy Henderson at 641-764-641-764-2486 or christy_henderson@mstm.us.

Again, if you are able to transport your children to school, instead of riding the bus, please do so. This will help us limit the number of students on each bus and create more space during transportation. If you are able to do this please let Jill Gavin, jill_gavin@mstm.us know as soon as possible.

Thank you for your help implementing these changes.

Tom Wood
Superintendent

Jill Gavin
Business Manager