

SCHOOL BUS POLICY

The Zumbrota-Mazeppa School District provides comprehensive busing above and beyond state requirements through a contract with Palmer Bus Service of Zumbrota-Mazeppa. Each day we strive to provide a safe and efficient bus service for our community. All **transportation concerns** can be directed to the Site Manager, Jake Berwald.

Office: 507-732-7670

Cell: 507-740-1602

Email: jakeb@palmerbusservice.com

The school district will provide transportation, at the expense of the school district, for all resident students who qualify for transportation based on residence location. Designated “walk zones” exist within the city limits of Zumbrota and Mazeppa. Students who reside within the boundaries of the Zumbrota walk zone who require regular transportation to Mazeppa, and vice versa, are **only** eligible for “Shuttle Bus” transportation between the designated School Bus Loading/Unloading zones located on school grounds. Transportation will be provided on all regularly scheduled school days or make-up days. Transportation will not be provided during the summer school break, except in certain circumstances. The school district will not provide transportation for students whose transportation privileges have been revoked or have been voluntarily surrendered by the students’ parent or guardian.

Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The school district’s general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses, including nonpublic and charter school students. The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and students are expected to observe the same behavior at the bus stop and on the bus as they do in the classroom. Consequences for misbehavior will be implemented and may include bus suspension, school detention, and/or removal of all transportation privileges.

To foster a safe and orderly bus environment, bus drivers are authorized to assign seats to **any** student for **any** reason. This includes bus wide implementation of "zone seating" where older students are seated near the back of the bus and younger students are near the front of the bus.

BUS REGISTRATION

The Zumbrota-Mazeppa School District and Palmer Bus Service of Zumbrota-Mazeppa use an “opt-in” system to help ensure the safest and most efficient routing for students eligible to ride a school bus. Students who will **only** be transported via Shuttle Bus are also required to have a completed registration form on file. Registration for all riders assists with student tracking and in

the unlikely event of an emergency situation. A link to the registration form will be sent out annually, but it will remain open all year long.

Families that do not complete the bus registration process by the summer deadline have effectively “opted out” of receiving transportation services for the upcoming school year. If your family’s situation changes, or you recently moved into the school district, you can elect to opt in by completing the registration form at any time during the year. **There may be a delay before a student can begin riding the bus. This could be due to potential route adjustments, the volume of requests at certain times of the year, and/or to ensure proper student tracking.**

Busing information will be sent out before the commencement of the school year. Please be advised that bus times can vary more than usual throughout the first few weeks of school as the driver becomes acclimated to the route.

Bus stops may be removed from a route if there have been no riders using the stop for ten consecutive days. Multiple attempts will be made to communicate stop removal before it occurs. To have a stop reinstated please contact Palmer Bus Service of Zumbrota-Mazeppa.

For rural stops; please communicate directly with your bus driver or the bus contractor as far in advance as possible whenever your children will not be riding, as their absence could greatly affect the timing of the rest of the route.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

While the law requires the school district to furnish transportation, it does not relieve parents/guardians of students the responsibility of supervision until such times as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day. Additional parent/guardian responsibilities for transportation safety include, but are not limited to:

- Become familiar with school district rules, policies, regulations, and the principles of school bus safety, and thoroughly review them with your children.
- Support safe riding and walking practices, and recognize that students are responsible for their own actions.
- Communicate safety concerns to school administrators and/or the bus contractor.
- Monitor bus stops, if possible. A number of misconduct issues on the bus occur because of something that happened while waiting for the bus.
- Have your children to the bus stop five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- Have their children properly dressed for the weather.
- Have a plan in case the bus is late.

Please take the time to review the bus rules with your student to ensure all students have a safe and comfortable ride to and from school. Yearly bus safety training to all required students is provided as well. This includes bus rules, safe riding expectations, and the emergency evacuations process. The Zumbrota-Mazeppa School District and Palmer Bus Service of Zumbrota-Mazeppa are committed to partnering with parents to guarantee the safe transport of the students we serve.

BUS STOP SAFETY

- Arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. To keep buses and routes running on time please do not wait in a car or house. Students are most easily seen at the bus stop, and the bus driver is not obligated to wait for students who are not at the bus stop.
- When at the bus stop, please stand at least three giant steps (six feet) away from the curb. The bus stop is not a place to run or play.
- When the school bus arrives, wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, the door opens, and the driver says it's okay before approaching the bus door. Use the handrails to avoid falling.
- When exiting a bus, look for any cars passing on the shoulder. Walk on a sidewalk if available or along the side of the street after exiting.
- **NEVER WALK BEHIND A SCHOOL BUS.** If you need to cross the street, do so in front of the bus with at least five giant steps (10 feet) between the front of the bus and you, and wait for the bus driver to signal that it's safe to cross. Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped. Keep watching traffic when crossing. If you drop something near the school bus, like a ball or book, tell the bus driver immediately. Do not try to pick up the item because the driver might not be able to see you.

RULES ON THE BUS

- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom.
- Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
- Go directly to your seat. Sit down facing forward, and remain seated until it is your time to leave the bus.
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- Keep your hands, feet, and belongings to yourself at all times.
- No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
- Do not throw any object on the bus, or out the bus windows.
- No eating, drinking, or gum chewing on the bus. Water is allowed.
- No tobacco, drugs, or weapons are allowed on the bus at any time.

- Do not damage the school bus or its contents.

SCHOOL BUS LOADING/UNLOADING ZONES

School Bus Loading/Unloading Zones on school grounds operate under the same rules and consequences as regular bus stops. We also require students and parents/guardians to observe the following additional rules: Parents/guardians who violate these rules, or are found to be directly contributing to students violating them, may also cause the student(s) to temporarily lose bus privileges.

- Do not stop or park anywhere along the curb in the MS/HS lot to drop off/pick up students. The curb is a no parking zone and citations may be issued for stopping or parking there. The designated parent pick up/drop off location is located at the District Office doors on the Mill St. side of the building.
- **NEVER WALK BETWEEN THE BUSES.** Walking into or from the parking lot from the rear of the bus, even if all the buses are parked, is extremely dangerous and thus is **strictly prohibited**.
- Students who are present when buses are arriving are required to stay on the sidewalk until it is time to load.
- Between routes and shuttles please wait for the driver to check the bus for any students or lost and found items. Students should calmly and orderly approach the bus from the sidewalk only after the driver has instructed them to.
- When arriving at the school please have your belongings packed up and be ready to unload. Do not stand or enter the aisle until the bus has come to a complete stop. To ensure the safest environment possible, the driver may also wait to open their door until the bus in the stall to their right has come to a complete stop.

CONSEQUENCES FOR BUS/BUS STOP MISBEHAVIOR

Consequences for misconduct will apply to all regular and late routes as well as shuttles. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extra-curricular events (for example, field trips or competitions) will be the sole discretion of the school district. Parents/guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges before they occur. **Please note:** When any student goes 60 transportation days without a report, the student's consequences may start over at the first offense.

Primary and Elementary School (K-6)

- 1st offense – Written warning.
- 2nd offense – 1-2 school-day suspension from riding the bus, depending on the severity of the infraction.

- 3rd offense – 2-5 school day suspension from riding the bus, depending on the severity of the incident. A conference will be held with the principal, bus contractor, and parents/guardians before the student can resume riding the bus.
- 4th offense – 15 school day suspension from riding the bus. A conference will be held with the principal, bus contractor, and parents/guardians before the student can resume riding the bus.
- Further offenses – individually considered. Students may be suspended for longer periods of time, including the remainder of the school year.

Middle and High School (7-12)

- 1st offense – Written warning.
- 2nd offense – 5 school day suspension from riding the bus.
- 3rd offense – 10 school day suspension from riding the bus. A conference will be held with the principal, bus contractor, and parents/guardians before the student can resume riding the bus.
- 4th offense – 20 school day suspension from riding the bus. A conference will be held with the principal, bus contractor, and parents/guardians before the student can resume riding the bus.
- 5th offense – suspended from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year.

Severity Clause: Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. In the case of severe disruption **immediate** suspension may be determined necessary. Incidents of this nature will be decided upon after consultation with the bus driver, bus contractor and principal. Bus riding privileges will be suspended indefinitely. A conference involving those named above will determine whether bus riding privileges will be reinstated or suspended for the remainder of the school year.

Other Discipline: Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school may also result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

Vandalism/Bus Damage: Students found intentionally damaging school buses may be held financially responsible for the damages. Failure to pay such damages (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks may result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

Cameras: All regular route and extracurricular school buses are equipped with cameras. The purposes of these cameras are to ensure student safety and will be reviewed if necessary for discipline issues by the school principal(s) and school bus contractor.

Records: Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual's school building and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of serious misconduct will be provided to the Department of Public Safety. Records also will be maintained at the school bus contractor office.