



2024-2025

To All ZPS Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to a new school year from all of us at Zeeland Public Schools' Transportation Department! To help the year go smoothly, we are sharing some important reminders about bus safety and "rules of the road". But first, a little background about who we are and what we do.

The ZPS district covers 94 square miles, which are serviced by 58 school buses on 167 regular bus runs, transporting almost 5,000 students each morning. The vehicles travel about 700,000 miles annually for regular education. Our department is made up of around 60 CDL bus drivers, 2 secretaries, 3 technicians, 2 bus paraprofessionals, as well as our transportation head of student well-being and director of transportation. We provide services to all ZPS schools as well as many other school buildings and programs, including Christian schools and special education.

The following items are important for you to know in order to help the Transportation Department run smoothly during your child's school years:

1. If your child is ill, please keep them at home. We cannot turn around to bring them back if they become sick on the bus. If they are the only child at their bus stop, please call us at (616) 748-3425, so we can inform the driver that they need not make the stop that day. You still need to call in the absence to their school.
2. Parents must always stress **SAFETY** at stop locations and on the bus! It is the parent's responsibility to get their child to and from a stop safely. **STUDENTS ARE TO STAY OFF THE ROAD AT ALL TIMES WHILE WAITING FOR THE BUS.** They must wait for the bus on the side of the road, away from traffic. Teach them to watch for oncoming vehicles at all times. The flashing red lights of a school bus may be on, but drivers don't always stop, creating an extremely dangerous situation for children crossing the street to or from a bus. It is very important that children follow the "Smiley Signal" that the drivers use to let them know when it is safe to cross. Explain the danger of roughhousing or fighting at the bus stop. Make sure your child understands the importance of staying seated on the bus at all times until they reach their stop and the vehicle is no longer in motion.
3. Students **MUST** be at their designated stop 5 minutes **BEFORE** the school bus arrives. With so many stops to make, it isn't possible for the bus to wait for a child to walk down the driveway after it arrives. There are no state laws dictating how far a child may walk to a bus stop, nor that a kindergartner must be picked up at their driveway.
4. Your child must have a backpack for their lunch, papers, books, etc. No skateboards, roller blades, ice skates, skis, sharp objects (such as pocket knives), and no live animals are allowed on the bus. Plastic roll-up sleds are the only type of sleds allowed. All games and toys are to be kept in backpacks or containers, out of sight, while students are on the bus.

5. A responsible adult should be at home when a child is dropped off after school, if your son/daughter is in K-5th grade. A responsible adult or approved older sibling **MUST** be at the bus stop for Y5/K students.
6. If your student needs to bring any sports equipment with them, everything must be enclosed in a bag and fit on their lap. Buses are full and students must share seats.
7. A blue Grow Note received for a violation of the bus rules will be given to the student for a parent/guardian to review. The note will be signed and returned to the driver the next time the child rides. In addition, a copy of the Grow Note will be emailed to the email address of the parent/guardian that is on file with ZPS. For minor infractions (not following bus driver instructions, minor misbehavior, safety concerns, etc...) the drivers can assign seats at any time for an unspecified amount of time and may issue a Grow Note. Grow Notes are kept on file for the current school year and may result in a suspension from the bus for 3-10 days, depending on the seriousness of the infraction and number of Grow Notes on file. Some extremely serious infractions such as weapons violations, fighting, or assaulting a driver, shall result in a minimum 1-day suspension, up to and including expulsion from riding for the remainder of the school year.
8. In case of bad weather, please watch for an email which will be sent to all Z For Me subscribers. For School Messenger text notifications, please text 'Y' to 67587. Also go online to zps.org, Facebook, or Twitter. TV: WOOD-8, WZZM-13, and FOX-17
9. Those students living in the ZPS district, who are eligible for transportation, will be provided with transportation to and from bus stops near their home. Each student will be allowed only one pick-up location and one drop-off location, be it at home or with a caregiver located **within the home school attendance area only**. It is important to choose these addresses carefully, because they will apply to each day of the school year. (Example: Pick up at home Monday-Friday, 1111 Home Address Lane; drop off at childcare provider Monday-Friday, 2222 Childcare Provider Lane.)
10. All students are required to use bus tags. Those will be distributed at each school's open house. Please make sure the tag is attached to their backpack or lanyard so they can swipe that each time they ride the bus. There will be a \$10 replacement fee for lost cards. Information regarding the card and fee can be found on the back of the card.
11. DAYCARE POLICY: **Unfortunately we don't have enough vehicles or staff necessary to deliver K-5th grade students anywhere in our district.** However, we will work to arrange stops near a daycare **WITHIN** the elementary school distinct boundary your student attends.

We are now using My Ride K-12 to track students getting on and off the bus. Please download the **My Ride K-12 app** from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store to stay informed about your children's transportation schedule. The schedule will be available about one week before the school year begins.

You will need the unique 8-digit student number that begins your child's email account (#201...). Most students have that memorized. The information is also available in the Parent Portal. You may contact the school or transportation office to obtain that number too. [My Ride K-12 App Info](#)

Please go to the the ZPS website to contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your continued partnership. Together we will make sure it's a great school year ahead!

Your ZPS Transportation Team