

## **SCHOOL BUS INFORMATION**

The Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) District Superintendent's Office (DSO) manages all DoDDS school bus services in the Kaiserslautern District. All students requiring bus transportation must be registered each year at the Student Transportation Office (STO.) Office hours on non-school weekdays are 0730-1200 and 1300-1630. Customer service hours during the school year are **0815-1200 1300-1600 hours Monday thru Friday**. However, during bus loading operations (1440-1510 hrs) the office is temporarily unmanned. The Student Transportation Office is closed US Holidays.

### **BAUMHOLDER STUDENT TRANSPORTATION OFFICE**

Building 8801, Room 14, Baumholder Middle/High School  
Phone: DSN 485-6874 Commercial: 06783-3054  
FAX Commercial: 063783-3053  
Email: Trans.Baumholder@eu.dodea.edu

Mr. Michael Merz

Transportation Specialist/QAE/COTR

### **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

Baumholder Middle/High School	DSN 485-7590 or 063783-5725
Smith Elementary School	DSN 485-7587 or 063783-5693
Wetzel Elementary School	DSN 485-7492 or 063783-6-7492

### **BUS SERVICES**

DoDDS school bus operations for the Baumholder schools' complex are by commercial bus companies providing services specifically defined in contracts with DoDDS. The Baumholder STOs conduct quality assurance of those contracts to ensure that services are provided as required. All inquiries about DoDDS bus services should be addressed to the STO and not directly to the bus drivers, security attendants or other contractor employees.

### **SCHOOL BUS REGISTRATION**

Initial registration for a bus pass has to be done at the Student Transportation Office. Students have to be registered every school year for bus transportation. New bus passes and the schedules are issued every year. For the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> year etc. bus registration can be done over the phone. Registration for the new school year starts in April. Parents do have to come to the office in late August to pick up the new passes and schedules. Eligibility guidance for can be found at: <http://www.eu.dodea.edu/newcomer.htm#eligibility>.

### **CENTRALIZED BUS STOPS**

Bus stops are established based on the size of a community or neighborhood to minimize commute times and provide fair and equitable transportation services for all registered riders. Maximum walking distances are 1 mile for Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 1.5 miles for 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. DoD Transportation Policy mandates centralized stops and does not allow establishment of bus stops solely for convenience.

### **ALTERNATE BUS STOPS**

Daily commute transportation is provided to and from centralized bus stops within walking distance of your primary residence. If you have reason to request an alternate location, such as before and after care, you may request an alternate bus stop location. This request must be in writing and taken to the STO for review of impact on bus routes, costs, etc. If the request is approved, a new or additional bus pass will be issued. For approval, an alternate bus stop location must be an existing school bus stop and within your commuting area. For security reasons, frequent requests or changes to a student's assigned bus stop are strongly discouraged.

## **BUS PASSES**

Students requiring DoDDS school bus transportation need to be registered each year with the appropriate Student Transportation Office. The bus pass contains the bus stop location and scheduled times as well as the route number and information on the student and sponsor. A different color of pass is used each year and expires at the end of the school year. These passes are used to ensure only authorized persons are on the school buses and are critical to identification of student and sponsor in case of accident or incident. No authorized student will ever be denied transportation to school. Each bus driver should have a list of students authorized to ride that bus, based on registration records at the STO. However, if students do not have a valid bus pass, they may be denied transportation home and the sponsor will be notified to pick them up at school. Bus passes are only valid for the route indicated on the pass. If a bus pass is lost or damaged, please contact the STO for a replacement. **SWAPPING, EXCHANGING OR FALSIFYING A BUS PASS IS PROHIBITED**, and could result in suspension of bus privileges.

## **LOST BUS PASSES**

In order to ride the school bus a student has to be in possession of a valid bus pass. If a student loses his/her bus pass he/she can come to the STO and immediately receive a new one. Students at Neubruecke Elementary School or Smith Elementary School can have a parent or the school secretary call the STO for a new pass.

## **TEMPORARY BUS PASSES**

If your student needs to ride a different bus on a temporary basis, contact the STO for a temporary bus pass. The parent must also provide a signed, written request for the student to bring to the STO. The same procedure applies for students who normally do not ride a bus, but are visiting a bus rider. For security and student accountability, all riders must have a bus pass issued for the bus on which they are riding and temporary bus passes must be signed for when issued. Using a bus pass for a different bus is prohibited.

## **AFTER SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

After school transportation is provided to some villages and military housing by passes from the Transportation Motor Pool. For details see the personnel at the STO or contact the 222<sup>nd</sup> BSB Transportation Motor Pool at DSN 485-1800 or Commercial 06783-1800.

## **BUS STOP AWARENESS**

We highly recommend that you visit your scheduled bus stop with your student(s) to determine the safest route to the stop, the traffic flow in the area and know the location of the nearest phone or other place to go in case of an emergency. Pointing out landmarks, house numbers, street names, etc., will assist the students in being able to identify their stop when on the bus. We also suggest that you and your student(s) review all of the safety do's, don'ts and other safety factors while at the stop. During the winter months, most of the bus routes are serviced prior to full daylight. Prior familiarization of the stop will minimize limitations caused by poor light conditions.

## **BUS SCHEDULES**

Times for each stop are departure times for the inbound (AM) run and arrival times for the outbound (PM) run. Recommend that riders be at the bus stop 5-10 minutes before scheduled departure time in the morning. This will ensure that riders will be ready to board the bus when it arrives. The bus will not wait for late students.

## **SEATING**

DoDDS Transportation considers some seats unsafe and do not allow occupation. A handout can be viewed and/or provided at the STO. The restricted seats are as follows:

- 1) The seat next to the drivers in vans, station wagons and cars.
- 2) The seat next to a bus entrance door.
- 3) Any seat that does not have a seat or solid barrier in front of it.

## **SEATBELTS**

If seats are equipped with a seatbelt wear is mandatory.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION**

Curb to curb bus service is provided only to special needs students that have a transportation requirement in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). These requirements are sent to the STO by the school, and do not require the parents to prepare a separate bus registration. Students will be transported in a vehicle that has appropriate restraints (i.e. safety seat, seat belts, harness, etc.) as identified in the IEP and the driver or safety aid will ensure each student is properly seated and safety restraints are used. Parents are responsible for taking their students to the curb for the pickup run and meeting the bus at the curb on the return trip. The driver and safety aid are not required to go to the door to pickup or drop off a child. For pickup service, the driver is required to wait until the scheduled departure time. If the student is not present the driver will continue on the scheduled route. For drop off service, if a parent or other designated person is not present to receive a student, the driver is required to wait 5 minutes after the scheduled arrival time at the stop and then contact the STO for guidance. In most cases the student will be returned to the school and the parents will be required to meet them there.

## **CANCELLATIONS AND CHANGES**

If your **special needs** student will not need bus service for a relatively short period of time due to illness or other temporary reason, please contact the **Baumholder STO (DSN 485-6874 or 06783-3054, Mr. Merz 0162-234-1770)** so the STO can advise the driver not to stop at your stop for that period of time. If there is a permanent or long-term change to the schedule, please notify the school to make the change via the IEP.

**Daily commute students do not need to notify the STOs of day-to-day changes to ridership.** We do ask that you contact the STO when you no longer need the bus service or there are permanent changes to your requirement. If you move to an area served by a different bus stop or route, you will need a new bus pass. Recommend that you drop by your STO before the move to make the transition smoother and allow us time to adjust schedules and routes as required.

## **SAFETY ATTENDANTS, SECURITY ATTENDANTS, BUS MONITORS AND PARENT RIDERS**

**Safety attendants** or safety aides are contractor employees assigned to buses for special needs students and buses with only kindergarten through second graders. Their job is to provide assistance to the students and maintain a safe environment on the bus.

**Bus Security Attendants** are contractor employees who are assigned to buses for **force protection only**. Funding restrictions preclude having a security attendant on every bus, every day. The security attendants are assigned to buses on a rotational basis to ensure the widest coverage to meet force protection requirements. In deference to force protection guidelines and operational security, the security attendant schedule is not published or disseminated to the public.

**Parent Riders** are not allowed to get on the bus, nor ride the bus, unless approved by the STO.

## **INCLMENT WEATHER, LATE BUS AND EARLY RELEASE PROCEDURES**

Weather conditions during the winter months can cause delays or cancellation of bus services. The decision to delay the start of the school day, release schools early or cancel the school day altogether rests with the BSB Commander. Delays are normally determined and announced on AFN stations beginning at 0600 hours. For local weather reports and road conditions you can call the Ramstein Air Base weather announcements at **480-COLD (06371-47-COLD)**. For information on school delays or closings listen to AFN radio FM 100.2 or AM 1107 for the KMC and for the Baumholder area at Birkenfeld FM 106.1. See also Winter Bus Information for Baumholder via the KDSO website Transportation page or at [http://www.kais-dso.eu.dodea.edu/Transportation/Baumholder\\_Winter\\_Bussing.doc](http://www.kais-dso.eu.dodea.edu/Transportation/Baumholder_Winter_Bussing.doc)

Weather conditions and road conditions can also be found at <http://g3operations.hqusareur.army.mil/Divisions/OPS/ASGConditions/default.asp>.

If you live in an area that does not receive a AFN radio broadcast, you should make arrangements with someone who does to contact you in case of delays or closings. If you have specific questions about school schedules, you should call the specific school office.

Some villages in the bussing area have stops that are often inaccessible during inclement weather even when most of the routes have no problems. The families living in those villages receive specific information on procedures to get to an alternate bus stop during inclement weather. However, anyone that feels a specific weather condition makes access to the bus stop doubtful is authorized to use any bus stop on their bus route.

Early release of school will be determined by the BSB commander in coordination with the school administration and announced according to community procedures. It is recommended that you do not come to the school to pick up your student(s) for an early release, especially if the release is due to bad weather. Students are much safer on the bus than in a smaller vehicle on treacherous roads.

At times there may be a delay of one or more routes due to localized conditions or mechanical breakdowns. The bus company is required to notify the STO of any delays in excess of 30 minutes. The STO will make every attempt to contact the sponsors of students on the delayed route to inform them of the delay. Therefore it is critical that you provide your STO with current phone numbers and emergency contact information.

### **SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING**

Each school has its own procedures for the safe arrival and departure of students. STO personnel assist in the morning unloading and the afternoon loading when possible. Buses will not depart the loading zone in the afternoon until the scheduled departure time or when released by school officials and/or STO personnel. Once the scheduled bus departure has begun, the drivers are not permitted to stop except for emergencies. If a student is not on the bus by the scheduled departure time, or a parent attempts to retrieve a student from the bus after the bus has departure has started, the driver is not permitted to open the bus door or otherwise delay the departure. If you wish to pick up your bus rider at the school, please let them know ahead of time where to meet you - somewhere other than the loading zone. If your student is still on the bus at departure time, you will have to meet them at one of the scheduled bus stops or at home.

### **LOADING ZONE SAFETY**

Due to the number of students that have to be unloaded or loaded in a short amount of time, loitering or playing in the vicinity of the loading zone is highly discouraged. Please advise your children that playing, bouncing or throwing balls in the loading / unloading zone is putting them and others at risk of injury, or worse. The same rule should be observed at the bus stops. In Germany there is no requirement for vehicles to stop for a loading or unloading school bus. However, on US military installations, passing a loading or unloading school bus is prohibited, the same as in the US. For the safety of all our students, please do not drive through the loading / unloading zones when school buses are loading or unloading.

USAREUR Pam 190-34/ USAFE Pam 31-206, Drivers Handbook and Examination Manual for Germany, #18, Para b. (6)(b): specifically address buses stopped to load or unload passengers,

***“Drivers approaching or following buses that have stopped for passengers to get on or off on property under the control of US Forces (for example, housing areas) must always stop. They may proceed only after the bus has begun to move.”***

## **SCHOOL PARKING**

During school bus unloading and loading times, the bus zone is for school buses only. Most locations are posted with the hours closed to all but school buses. Suggest you contact your school to determine the parking that you may use. Also note paragraph 2 above, "Loading Zone Safety."

## **MISSED BUS STOPS**

Occasionally, a student will miss their stop on the return run. If this happens, the student should remain on the bus. If a student is not completely comfortable that a stop is the proper one, remaining on the bus is the safest thing to do. The bus company and the STO have procedures for getting the students to the proper stop or return to the school for parent pickup.

## **MISPLACED OR LOST STUDENT PROCEDURES**

If a child misses their bus stop and stays on the bus, the driver will report this to the contract manager who will contact the STO. The STO will contact the parent, or emergency contact, to arrange a drop off or parental pickup of the child. Unless the bus driver receives specific instructions to the contrary, the student will be returned to their school and the parent or designated adult will be required to pick up the student at the school. If your child does not arrive home (or other designated location) after school as expected, you should contact your STO immediately. The STO staff will stay on duty and work with the school office until your child is located and returned to you or a designated adult. Our experience has been that "lost" students often are with friends, neighbors or at a location which they thought was the agreed upon place for them to go after school. When you call the STO about a lost student, it would help to have the names of the student's friends who ride the same bus. It would also help for us to know that the parents and or care-providers have been in contact with each other to determine if the child is with either of them. If you locate your child after you contact the STO and school, please give a courtesy call to the STO and school to let us know that the child has been located.

## **LOST ITEMS**

For lost student property call the STO and provide a detailed description of the lost item and where your child was sitting on the bus. We will call the bus company to search for the lost item. Some buses do not return to Baumholder after a school run and it will take longer to search. Have your child check with the driver on the next run because some drivers will keep hold the property knowing the owner will ride again. Items that are not claimed for within 24 hours are taken to the schools' lost and found.

## **SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE**

Safe and secure transportation of DoDDS students is our mission. Proper student behavior and parental support of the discipline program is a key element of that mission. Although riding the school bus is a privilege, with that privilege is every student's right to have a safe and unencumbered ride to and from school. Request that you review the enclosed Behavior Standards with your child and stress the important part that they play in making the school bus ride an enjoyable and safe experience for all. For more information see "10 SCHOOL BUS RULES," "AT THE BUS STOP" and "ON THE BUS." For the more on school bus discipline visit: <http://www.eu.dodea.edu/policies/studentschoolbusbehaviorpolicy.pdf> via the DoDDS-E Transportation webpage: <http://www.eu.dodea.edu/transport.htm>.

## **COMPLAINTS OR SUGGESTIONS**

If you have a concern about the operation of a bus route or student conduct on the buses, please contact the Student Transportation Office (STO). Do not address your issue to the bus driver or security attendant unless it is an emergency. Complaints and misconduct reports should be submitted in writing (email ([Trans.baumholder@eu.dodea.edu](mailto:Trans.baumholder@eu.dodea.edu)), fax (06783-3053), letter or on a customer inquiry form that is available at the STO. If you have an emergency or safety issue please call Mr. Merz (at 0162-234-1770) and follow it up with a written statement so we have a detailed first-hand record of the report.

## **MORE HELPFUL LINKS**

Newcomers: <http://www.eu.dodea.edu/newcomer.htm>

What parents need to know: <http://www.eu.dodea.edu/trans/Newcomers2005.pdf>

## **10 SCHOOL BUS RULES**

1. Obey the driver or adult.
2. Enter and exit the bus safely and always show your bus pass
3. Stay properly seated and use seatbelts when available.
4. Keep your hands, feet and other body parts to yourself.
5. Do not throw things.
6. Put nothing out of the window.
7. Remain quiet and do not disturb the driver or others.
8. No profanity, indecency, smoking or prohibited items.
9. Do not eat, drink or chew gum.
10. Be responsible and be safe.

***BUS DRIVERS, SECURITY ATTENDANTS, AND SAFETY ATTENDANTS ARE ALLOWED TO PULL YOUR BUS PASS.***

### **AT THE BUS STOP**

1. Students should be at bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time.
2. Children, six years of age and under, should be escorted and supervised by an adult, while waiting for the bus at the bus stop.
3. To be safe students must stay at least three steps away from the edge of the curb.
4. When dismounting the bus, walk 3 steps away and wait for the bus to depart, before crossing the street.
5. Do not walk between, in front of, or behind a school bus.
6. The driver will stop at authorized stops only.
7. Driver will not wait for late students. Once the driver closes the door, he is not allowed to reopen for late student/s.
8. Do not chase the bus.