



Memorandum Re - New Kindergarten Students & Transportation – 2018/19 School Year

Dear families of new Kindergarten students:

December, 2017

As part of preparations for enrolling your child(ren) in Kindergarten for the first time, Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO) would like to provide you with important information on transportation and school bus services. STSCO oversees student transportation service for local School Boards. You can find out more about our services by visiting **www.stsco.ca** and exploring the information provided which includes common transportation facts that you may wish to understand prior to school starting next September. Busing information for new JK students can be obtained after August 1st by contacting the STSCO office by phone or email comments@stsco.ca. On our website, we also offer a portal where, after school starts in September, you can check your JK child's transportation information by confidentially entering their Ontario Education Number/OEN, which is assigned once they start school, and their birth date.

Some of STSCO's Special Services:

***First Rider Program:** This is a safety training program for first time riders held in August every year. Dates will be provided to schools prior to June and publicized on stsco.ca and in local media prior to the sessions being held.

***Bus ID Tag:** Schools provide a Bus Identification Tag for recording your child's transportation information to help students, staff and bus drivers at the start of the school year. Please contact your school prior to first day of school to take part.

***Buster the Bus:** Buster is a motorized, talking school bus who, with the help of his friendly handlers, visits many area schools in September and October to further reinforce bus safety with young students.

***Bus Safety and Emergency Evacuation Training:** In the fall and spring, bus companies assist us by visiting each school and teaching students about bus safety rules and what to do in case of an emergency while riding on a bus.

Some Important Transportation Service Facts:

Transportation eligibility is determined by distance from nearest property access point of the student's home residence to the nearest property access point of their designated school of attendance as measured by STSCO staff along maintained streets and walkways. **Beginning in September, 2017, the School Board is planning to implement a policy walk distance of 1.0 km (1,000 m) for JK and SK Kindergarten students, increasing to 1.6 km (1,600 m) as they move into Grade 1 and beyond.** Students residing outside this distance are eligible for School Board supplied transportation. Families of students within this distance are responsible for getting their child(ren) to school.

Transportation is a shared responsibility. The combined efforts of students, families, bus drivers and companies, school staff and STSCO ensure a safe, effective and enjoyable system which provides for the needs of all eligible students.

Family Responsibility: Where a student is eligible for transportation, families are responsible for the safe passage of their child(ren) from their home or caregiver location to the bus stop in the morning and back again in the afternoon.

Bus Company Responsibility: Companies are responsible for ensuring that students have a safe ride to and from school.

School Responsibility: Schools are responsible for student behaviour while students are riding on buses.

STSCO Responsibility: STSCO is responsible for ensuring that bus stop locations are reasonable with the bus being adequately visible to vehicular traffic in the area and students being able to wait and disembark at a reasonable location adjacent to their bus stop.

Stop locations are generally centralized to serve several nearby families. The distance guideline for elementary student walk to bus stop is 1.0 km (1,000 m) and stops are reviewed annually as part of STSCO's route planning. Of course, not all families need to make their way to bus stops which are set 1 km away and most stops are at a closer distance.

Should you have any questions regarding our services, please contact the STSCO office, at (705) 748-5500 or 1-800-757-0307. STSCO wishes each new Kindergarten student all the best in the coming year.

Joel Sloggett, C.A.O., STSCO