



Board Policy #680.0

Student Transportation

Document Integration Project Format

Policy Statement

Recognizing the large rural and urban geographic dimensions of York Region, it is the policy of the York Region District School Board to provide transportation services to students deemed to be eligible as stated in this policy.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- the provision of transportation services for all students deemed eligible from Junior Kindergarten (JK) to Grade 12;
- ensuring trustee representation on the Joint Board Consortium;
- advising senior staff of implementation issues;
- reviewing the provision for transportation to optional programs annually;
- establishing the Board policy which governs Student Transportation Services (STS);
- referring operational concerns and matters of interpretation to the Superintendent of Schools for investigation and response;
- referring transportation eligibility issues to STS for resolution; and
- reviewing the provision for transportation to optional programs through the Budget process annually.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- implementing and operationalizing the *Student Transportation* policy; and
- ensuring that appropriate decisions are made with respect to new and/or emerging transportation issues.

Coordinating Superintendents of Education are responsible for:

- establishing the criteria for and managing the procedure for temporary transportation; and
- reviewing and making decisions on compelling circumstances regarding safety and non transportation zones as required.

Superintendents of Schools are responsible for:

- being the main communicators between and among STS, principals, trustees and the community;
- recommending temporary transportation to the Coordinating Superintendent of Education;
- responding to concerns raised by trustees, parents and community members; and
- applying the transportation policy and procedure.

Principals are responsible for:

- dealing with all problems of discipline on Board-provided transportation services;
- consistently communicating the policy and procedure to students, parents and the community;
- managing the daily school related operational issues and reporting any concerns to senior staff;
- communicating that transportation for field trips and extra-curricular activities is the responsibility of the student and parent and not Student Transportation Services; and
- administering the validation of eligible ridership as provided by the Student Transportation Services.

Student Transportation Services (STS) is responsible for:

- providing safe, efficient and on time transportation for students;
- establishing and managing bus routes based on Board criteria; and
- ensuring the seating capacity of a school vehicle is limited to the manufacturer's rating.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring their child(ren) arrive at the collector points on time for pick up;
- picking up their child(ren) at school at the end of the morning JK/SK half-day program;
- dropping off their child(ren) at school for the start of the afternoon JK/SK half-day program;
- transporting their child(ren) who, by choice, attend a school other than their community school unless attending a transportation approved optional program;
- ensuring the safety and behaviour of their child(ren) prior to pick-up and following drop-off at the end of the school day; and
- ensuring their children are dropped off and picked up for extra-curricular activities, field trips and/or extended student travel.

Students are responsible for:

- appropriate behaviour while riding the school bus in accordance with Board policies and procedures and their school's Code of Conduct; and
- riding a school bus only when eligible under the Board policy or when temporary permission has approved.

Legislative Context

Education Act

Definitions

Community School

Community school refers to the school to which a student is assigned by the Board to attend for regular programming (English track) based on the student's home address. Transportation zones apply.

Collector Points

Collector points are centralized designated locations for the pick-up and drop-off of students. The factors to determine collector points are student safety, bus route efficiency and economy.

Eligible Students

Eligible students are those who live within the approved transportation zone for their community school or are attending an optional program for which the Board of Trustees has approved transportation.

Exceptional Students

For transportation purposes, exceptional students are those students deemed exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). Exceptional students receive transportation in accordance with Board policy and their IPRC.

Optional Program

An optional program is a program which students may choose to attend. An optional program is not Ministry-mandated, but offered by the Board and may or may not be located at the student's community school.

Students attending optional programs do **not** receive transportation unless approved by the Board of Trustees or if the program is located at a student's community school. In all cases, transportation zones apply. Transportation to optional programs is reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Board's Budget process.

French Immersion

French Immersion is an optional program which the Board of Trustees has approved transportation as follows:

- elementary students who live within the transportation zone of the French Immersion program servicing their community school; and
- secondary students who are not considered transit served and who live within the transportation zone as determined by Student Transportation Services.

Public Transportation

Public transportation is defined as municipal/regional transit service (YRT/VIVA) or Go Transit. Students qualifying are eligible for reimbursement beyond the cost of the YRT single zone pass.

Ride Time

Ride time is the time a student spends on a bus from collector points. The walking time to and from collector points is not included.

Ride times on public or Board provided transportation exceeding approximately 60 minutes would be considered exceptional circumstances.

Student Transportation Services (STS)

Student Transportation Services (STS) is a joint venture between the Catholic and public school boards in York Region. The mandate of STS is to provide safe, efficient and on time transportation for all eligible students.

Student Transfers

Students who transfer out of their community school are considered student transfers and are **not** eligible for transportation.

Transportation

In most instances, transportation refers to busing provided by STS. Transportation is provided for students who live within the grade appropriate transportation zone for their community school attendance area or transportation approved optional program. While a student's home or caregiver's address may be used to determine bus eligibility, either address must be:

- used consistently;
- within the school boundary; and
- within the transportation zone.

a) *Transportation Zone*

This is an area designated by Board policy as eligible for school vehicle transportation.

- Measurement methods to establish transportation zones are completed along pedestrian routes within a municipality and recognize roadways, municipal walkways and parks. Measurements shall be made from the edge of a student's driveway to the closest access to the school property.

b) *Non Transportation Zone*

This is an area designated by Board policy as ineligible for school vehicle transportation.

- Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 – a child who lives within 1.2 kilometres of the school is **not** eligible for Board-provided transportation.
- Grade 4 to Grade 8 – a child who lives within 1.6 kilometres of the school is **not** eligible for Board-provided transportation.
- Grades 9 to 12 – a secondary school student living in an area served by public transit is **not** eligible for Board-provided transportation.
- A secondary student living more than 3.2 kilometres from the nearest secondary school in an area not served by public transit is eligible for Board-provided transportation.

Walking Distances to School Bus Collector Points

For community schools, walking distances to school bus collector points shall not exceed 400 metres for elementary students and 600 metres for secondary students. Walking distances are measured by STS using the most direct walking route (which may include pathways) from the edge of a student's residence to the closest collector point.

Department

Business Services
Education and Community Services

Policy History

Approved 1992
Revised 1998
Revised 2006
Revised 2011

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Procedure #680.0 Student Transportation

Document Integration Project Format

This procedure outlines how the York Region District School Board, staff, and Student Transportation Services (STS) provide transportation services to eligible York Region District School Board students.

Procedure Definitions

Child Care Transportation

Transportation is provided to before and after care providers, consistent with the transportation policy. Where changes to transportation arrangements to child care facilities are deemed necessary they will be effective at the start of the subsequent school year.

Temporary Transportation

Temporary transportation refers to situations where students who are **not** eligible for board provided transportation request access to an available seat on a school bus. Temporary transportation is only provided in compelling circumstances and may be revoked as required throughout the school year. Students who apply for transfer as defined by Policy #108, Student Accommodation - Attendance Areas and Student Transfers do **not** qualify for transportation nor would they be considered for temporary transportation.

Approval of temporary transportation may only be granted by the coordinating superintendent of education in consultation with superintendents of schools, based on the following criteria:

- requests will be made in writing by the parent to the Superintendent of Schools for each school year;
- the maximum length of approval is for the duration of the current school year or less
- there will be a cost analysis by STS;
- logistics such as routing and stops are considered; and
- there is room on the bus.

The completion of an application form is required. Where approval is granted, the conditions for temporary transportation will be communicated in writing to the parent and entered into appropriate databases.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather is defined as road or weather conditions which make it impossible to operate a bus safely.

Joint Board Consortium

The Joint Board Consortium consists of representatives from the York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board and Student Transportation Services who are responsible for overseeing the transportation of school children in York Region.

Pick Up and Drop Off Times

Pick up and drop off times are times determined by STS when the school bus will pick up and drop off students at their designated collector points.

School Bus Operators

The school bus operators are private companies who have been contracted by STS to provide busing to students in York Region. School bus operators provide the equipment, maintenance and drivers, and operate on routes designed and supervised by STS.

Students with Medical Certificates

Students with medical certificates, provided by a qualified medical practitioner, are students who are unable to walk to school because of physical or health reasons. Medical certificates must be consistent with school observations and programming to qualify and an application for temporary transportation must be completed.

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the *Student Transportation* procedure.

Coordinating Superintendents of Education shall:

- review and decide on approval of temporary transportation;
- keep a record of students utilizing temporary transportation;
- revoke temporary transportation privileges as required; and
- review compelling circumstances regarding non transportation zones as required.

Superintendents of Schools shall:

- recommend temporary transportation to the coordinating superintendent of education; and
- respond to concerns raised by parent/community members and apply the transportation policy and procedure.

Principals shall:

- ensure that the school administrative system has current student data;
- validate ridership processes as provided by the Manager of Student Transportation Services;
- contact the bus operators and the student transportation planner early in the school year to arrange a meeting with the bus drivers to review the responsibilities of drivers;
- identify to STS, any students with known health problems that may require special consideration affecting transportation, and as deemed necessary, supply a medical plan as defined by Policy #662.0, Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings;
- provide each student eligible for transportation with information related to busing procedures;
- provide parents with information regarding child care centres that are within walking distance to the school or to which STS will provide transportation;
- ensure that all students and parents/guardians are aware that every student is responsible to the principal of the school for his or her conduct while traveling on the school bus;
- refer requests for temporary transportation of ineligible riders to the coordinating superintendent of education through the superintendent of schools;

- communicate with bus drivers about which ineligible students have been approved for temporary transportation;
- authorize short term transportation on existing routes for a maximum of five days to accommodate special requests from families;
- establish procedures for the approval of alternate bus stops when in compelling circumstances a request is made for a student to embark or disembark the bus at an established stop other than the one to which the student is assigned;
- apply disciplinary action in accordance with Board policies and procedures and the school's Code of Conduct in matters that occur on Board provided transportation; and
- notify STS if there are concerns regarding a school bus driver.

Student Services Coordinators shall:

- facilitate transportation for exceptional students requiring special transportation;
- forward to STS a copy of all Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) reports which outline specific transportation needs of each eligible student;
- forward to STS a detailed request for transportation for students attending facilities other than York Region public schools; and
- ensure that the responsibilities for school staff and parent/guardian are clear with respect to securing and releasing restraints when required for the safety of students with special needs, as bus drivers are not responsible for securing and releasing restraints.

The Child Care Coordinator shall:

- provide the principal with current information for parents regarding child care centres that are within the schools non transportation zone or to which STS will provide transportation.

The Senior Manager of Administrative Services shall:

- manage the operations of Student Transportation Services in conjunction with the York Catholic District School Board.

The Manager of Student Transportation Services shall:

- identify those students entitled to transportation;
- establish and communicate processes for rider validation on school buses;
- ensure that Grades JK to 6 students do not spend more than 45 minutes travelling in a vehicle to or from school, and shall not schedule any pick-up more than 60 minutes prior to school start time (unless under exceptional circumstances);
- ensure that Grades 7 - 12 students do not spend more than 60 minutes travelling in a vehicle to or from school, and shall not schedule any pick-up more than 75 minutes prior to school start time (unless under exceptional circumstances);
- work with the superintendent of schools and/or special education coordinators to determine which exceptional students require transportation;
- approve, on recommendation of the principal, requests for transportation for students with dependent children provided that a child care program stop does not delay unreasonably or necessitate re-routing a bus;
- have the authority to cancel buses in circumstances of inclement weather when road or weather conditions make it impossible to operate a bus safely; buses may be canceled by municipality or regionally; and
- contact the media when required regarding bus transportation on inclement weather days.

The Student Transportation Planner shall:

- establish bus routes and collector points; and
- be responsible for informing schools, students, and bus operators of the bus routes.

School bus operators shall:

- employ only drivers properly licensed to drive school buses;
- arrange for bus drivers to meet the principals early in the school year to review the responsibilities of the driver of a school bus;
- where a school bus is involved in an accident, or where a child is injured while boarding the bus, while on the bus, or when leaving the bus, promptly notify the principal and STS and provide them with a written report on the accident; and
- advise the Manager of Student Transportation Services prior to 5:30 a.m. if road or weather conditions make it impossible to operate a bus safely.

School bus drivers shall:

- adhere to the schedule established for the route and shall advise the operator when it has not been possible to keep within that schedule;
- meet with the school principal to review the responsibilities of drivers;
- at all times be aware that he/she is primarily responsible to the operator and that, within the limits of authority delegated to him/her by the operator, he/she is responsible to the principal;
- be responsible to the principal for maintaining proper conduct on a school bus at all times whether while entering the bus, on the bus, or leaving the bus; the driver is responsible for reporting promptly to the principal of the school which a student attends any problems of discipline on the bus;
- ensure that all students are seated while on the bus and that all students have exited by the end of the bus route;
- report to the school bus operator if the number of students exceeds the specified capacity of the bus;
- report to the principal concerns about the eligibility of riders on the school bus;
- not restrict pick-ups or drop-offs unless directed by the school or STS;
- let the student off the bus only when the situation is considered safe and then is responsible for signaling the student to cross the road. If conditions at the school bus stop appear to the driver to be unsafe or unusual the child may be returned to the school under the principal's care;
- where a school bus is involved in an accident, or where a child is injured while boarding the bus, while on the bus, or when leaving the bus, promptly notify the school bus operator;
- if an incident occurs on the way to school, transport the student to school and report the incident to the principal immediately;
- if an incident occurs on the way home, provide transportation to school the next school day for the student(s) involved unless given direction by the principal/manager of STS not to do so; and
- determine appropriate action, in consultation with the principal and/or manager of STS, if a disciplinary issue arises.

Students with dependent children shall:

- if transportation is approved by STS, provide a child seat if necessary for their pre-school age child.

Parents shall:

- refer to Board Policy and Procedure #108, Student Accommodation – Attendance Areas and Student Transfers in the following situations;
 - if they wish to have their child attend an optional program offered in a school other than their community school,
 - if their child is directed by the Board to attend a school other than their community school,
 - when a school boundary has been changed, and
 - when a new school opens.

Department

Business Services
Education and Community Services

Procedure History

January 1985
April 1991
April 2006
Revised 2011

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