

STEO

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION
OF EASTERN ONTARIO



Transportation Information and Guidelines for Students and Parents

www.steo.ca





Transportation Information and Guidelines for Students and Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO) is an effective and efficient consortium which oversees the transportation services purchased by the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario and the Upper Canada District School Board.

Our goal is to provide safe, efficient, and reliable transportation services for our students and schools.

We ask that students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, principals, operators and drivers use this booklet for reference throughout the school year to assist in our common goal of a safe transportation system.

For more information please visit our website at www.steo.ca.

** Please note: Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right. Improper conduct may result in the withdrawal of this privilege.*

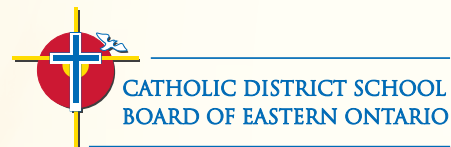


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Guidelines for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parents/Guardians can assist in our efforts to maintain high standards of safety and acceptable student behaviour on school buses by adhering to the following guidelines:

- STEO can only provide one space per child. STEO cannot provide spaces on two different bus routes for the same child. Within existing routes, where feasible and safe, a student can access a different location for pickup and drop-off within the same route provided it is for five (5) consecutive days upon approval of STEO.
- School bus drivers can only pickup and drop-off riders at an authorized regular daily stop for a home, caregiver or school address. Drivers cannot make changes to stops without authorization from STEO.
- Transportation for non-school related functions is the parent's responsibility. Only those students eligible for transportation are entitled to ride a bus that has been assigned to them. STEO cannot provide transportation for special events such as birthday parties, sleepovers, a homework project, to complete community service hours or for a job. These requests cannot be permitted for safety reasons.



- STEO strives to ensure the safe transportation of students. Ultimately, each parent has the right and legal obligation to protect their child. You may decide to keep your child at home, at any time, if you feel that it is too risky to have him/her transported to school. When buses are cancelled due to inclement weather but the school remains open, it is your responsibility to either arrange transportation or keep your child at home or with a caregiver.

- Please ensure that your child is at the bus stop **5 minutes prior** to the arrival of the bus. Drivers cannot wait for children to arrive at their bus stop.



- If a student requires the use of crutches or has a leg cast that could cause a safety issue/concern on the bus, STEO is to be notified and alternate transportation arrangements will be made.
- Always be aware of the bus operator, route number, stop location, and pickup and drop-off times for your child.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) should not stop, delay or board the bus when the bus driver is transporting students to and from school.
- Remember that you are responsible for your child's safety and conduct prior to boarding the bus and following drop-off at a designated stop.



This includes walking or driving your child to and from the bus stop. In the case of a JK-SK student, or in a special situation that has been approved by the school, STEO, and bus operator, a trusted responsible person must accompany your child to and from the bus stop. If no one

meets the child at the bus stop, drivers are directed to take the child back to school or to the proper authorities. It is a parental responsibility to ensure that children arrive home safely from the bus stop.



- With respect to JK-SK students, parents can ensure that the Purple Band, provided by the school, is securely attached to the handle of their child's backpack to enable drivers to quickly identify these students.
- Ensure that you meet your child on the same side of the street where he/she exits the school bus.
- Notify the school as soon as possible of any changes to your address, baby-sitter, telephone number, etc.
- Notify the school if your child is prone to severe allergies and/or life-threatening reactions, as appropriate transportation medical forms need to be completed and given to STEO.
- Make sure that your child has his/her belongings packed in a secure school bag.
- Objects that may interfere with student or vehicle safety cannot be permitted on the school bus (refer to Transporting Articles on the School Bus on page 9).
- Ensure that clothing toggles and drawstrings are not left dangling, as they can become snagged on school bus handrails, doors or other mechanical equipment. Incidents of snagged toggles or drawstrings have resulted in injuries.
- Regularly review with your child the safety rules for riding on the school bus (refer to Student School Bus Safety on page 7).



Responsibilities of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of Children Requiring Special Needs Transportation

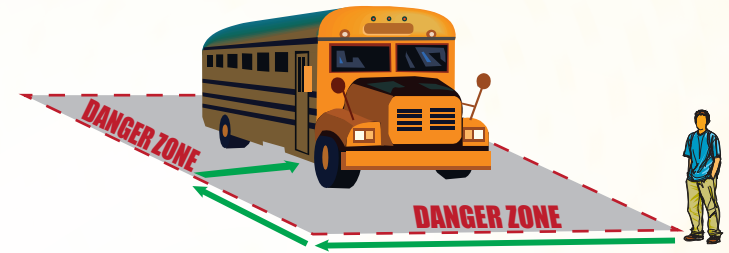
- Know your child's specialized vehicle number and driver's name.
- Have your child ready for pickup at the same time each day. If the specialized vehicle is delayed, all students will be late for school. If your child is regularly late, the driver will make a report which will be given to the school principal.
- Realize that your child must behave appropriately while on the specialized vehicle as per this booklet.
- Assist your child from the place of residence to the vehicle; on return from school assist your child from the vehicle to the place of residence.
- Impress upon your child the need for good safety practices, including the use of the seat belt at all times when in the vehicle and to remain in the seat that is assigned to them.
- Place names on articles that belong to your child, such as lunch boxes, hats, mittens, scarves etc., to avoid loss.
- Be aware of the procedures followed in cases of storms or emergencies and to have in place the appropriate arrangements for supervision, should your child be brought home earlier than normal.



Student School Bus Safety

RULES FOR GETTING ON THE BUS SAFELY

- Be at the bus stop **5 minutes prior** to the arrival of the bus. Never run to or from the bus.
- Wait at your designated stop in a safe place, back from the side of the road.
- Remember never to stand in the danger zone that surrounds the bus. The danger zone is anywhere close enough for you to touch the bus.



- If you need to cross the street to get on the bus, always wait until the bus has come to a complete stop. Look for the stop arm to come out and for the flashing red lights. Watch the driver. When the driver is assured that all traffic has stopped he/she will signal for you to cross the street - but continue to watch for traffic yourself. Always walk, don't run.
- Hold the handrail as you get on the bus. Do not push or shove.

RULES FOR RIDING THE BUS SAFELY

- Take your seat promptly and sit properly, facing forward at all times.
- Place bags and parcels under your seat or on your lap.
- Keep the aisle of the bus clear at all times.
- Always keep your head, hands and arms inside the bus.

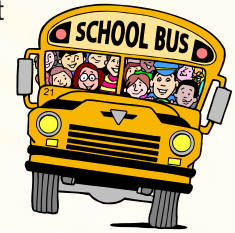
- Throwing objects inside or outside of the bus is not permitted.
- Talk quietly; the driver needs to concentrate to safely drive the bus.
- Fighting, shouting, or use of obscene language is not permitted.
- Be absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
- Participate in all bus evacuation procedures.
- Dangerous, disturbing, or annoying objects are not permitted on the bus.
- Eating and drinking (this includes chewing gum) is not allowed on school buses at any time. This rule protects students or drivers that have food allergies and anaphylaxis, prevents choking, and maintains bus cleanliness.
- Be aware that other students, including the bus driver, may have allergies to scents such as perfume, etc.
- Smoking is not permitted on the bus.
- Always follow the bus driver's instructions

RULES FOR LEAVING THE BUS SAFELY

- Remain in the seat until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- When you leave the bus, hold the handrail and take two large steps away from the bus.
- To cross the street in front of the bus, walk ahead at least ten giant steps (three metres). Cross only when the driver gives a signal. Proceed across the street, looking both ways for on-coming traffic.
- Cross the street in single file.
- If everyone is getting off the bus, the people at the front leave first. Do not push.
- If you drop something near the bus, do not pick it up. Tell an adult.

Transporting Articles on the School Bus

For safety reasons, only certain equipment is permitted on the bus.



- Skates, roller blades and sports balls must be carried in a sports bag.
 - Sports bags must be kept on the floor at the student's feet.
 - Music equipment must be transported in a case and should be kept on the student's lap whenever possible.
 - Approval must be granted in advance between the principal (or designate) and bus operator to transport skis, poles, skateboards, hockey equipment and program related items such as large musical instruments.
 - Dangerous objects are not permitted on the school bus (examples: knives, guns, etc.).
 - Animals are not permitted on the bus.
- * In case of a dispute, the final decision as to what may or may not be transported rests with the bus operator.*

Student Safety Programs

FIRST TIME RIDERS

The "First Time Riders" program is an education and awareness program designed to promote school bus safety to young children attending Kindergarten, and their parent(s)/guardian(s). Parent(s)/guardian(s) are welcome to attend these sessions.





BUSTER THE BUS

A program for Kindergarten to grade 2 students, Buster the Bus is a small robotic school bus with flashing lights and a safety crossing arm. Buster captivates students while speaking about school bus safety regarding issues such as:

waiting for the bus, boarding, riding, and getting off the bus.

BUS EVACUATION

During the months of September/October schools and students participate in school bus emergency evacuation drills.

THINK OF US ON THE BUS

“Think of us on the bus” is a bus safety awareness program that provides students with cue cards containing bus safety information, to help emphasize key safety points. The students are asked to create hand-drawn pictures detailing what bus safety means to them. These cards are then distributed by local police departments to motorists with busing traffic violations.

Disciplinary Action for Improper Conduct on the School Bus

Riding on a school bus is a privilege, not a right. Improper conduct may result in the withdrawal of this privilege.

School buses under contract with STEO are considered to be an extension of the school system. Consequently, the disciplinary standards set by your school, school board, and STEO will apply to all vehicle passengers.

Students whose behaviour endangers the safety or interferes with the comfort of others may have their riding privileges revoked.

Students are responsible to the school principal for their behaviour on the school bus. The bus driver acts on behalf of the principal. Students will obey instructions from the driver. Compensation for damage or destruction of board property by a student is the responsibility of the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). This also applies to school buses.

PROCESS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

First Incident

The driver will report the student/incident to the principal, in writing. The principal will then notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the incident. Major incidents may result in immediate withdrawal of bus privileges.

Second Incident

The driver will report the student/incident to the principal, in writing. The principal may withdraw the student’s transportation privileges for up to three (3) days. The principal will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the incident.

Further Incidents

The driver will report the student/incident to the principal, in writing. The principal may remove busing privileges for a period, not exceeding five (5) days. The principal will notify the school superintendent, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the incident.

Major Incidents

The driver will report the student/incident to the principal in writing. The student shall have transportation privileges withdrawn for an extended period (up to the balance of the school year), as determined in consultation with the school superintendent and the STEO Operations Manager, and STEO GM/CAO. The principal will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the incident. Any incident considered a serious threat to bus or student security shall result in consequences in accordance with school board Safe School’s policies.

Video Cameras on School Buses

Video cameras on school buses may be used to promote good student behaviour, aid in driver training, and to assist in promoting good driver/student relationships.

Inclement Weather

METHODS OF COMMUNICATING BUS CANCELLATIONS

STEO would like to advise students and parent(s)/guardian(s) that we have three methods in which you can check for bus cancellations:

1. Announcements regarding the cancellation of school bus and special vehicle transportation will be aired on local area radio and television stations, beginning at 6:15 a.m.
2. Access STEO's website at www.steo.ca, and click on the "Bus Cancellation Status" button. School bus cancellations will be posted by 6:15 a.m.
3. Call 1-866-629-0629 to access a pre-recorded message. During inclement weather, if busing is cancelled, the message will be posted by 6:15 a.m.

*** If transportation is cancelled in the morning, afternoon transportation will not operate.**



INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE

- Reviewing and preparing the inclement weather process begins in July and is completed by the first of November each year.
- The school jurisdictions are separated into 18 zones, with a bus operator as a weather captain in each zone.
- STEO contracts with Pelmorex/The Weather Network, one of the top weather forecasters in the country, to provide the most accurate weather information.
- Forecasted inclement weather information is verified the day before at 2:00 p.m., and depending on this forecast the bus operators may be notified.
- Weather forecasts are reviewed at 9:30 p.m. and again at 4:00 a.m.
- At 4:30 a.m. the bus operator weather captains and their staff drive various roads in their zone checking road and weather conditions.
- At 5:00 a.m. both the STEO General Manager/CAO and the Operations Manager begin to receive phone calls from the weather captains for updates on conditions.
- At 5:40 a.m. each school board's director or designate is contacted to discuss a recommended decision.
- At 5:45 a.m. the decision is made on whether or not busing is cancelled for the day.
- At 6:15 a.m. if busing is cancelled, radio and TV stations are faxed and called. The cancellation page on STEO's website, in conjunction with the message on the 1-866 inclement weather phone number, is updated.



**Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario
P.O. Box 1179, 104 Commerce Drive
Prescott, Ontario
K0E 1T0**

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Telephone: 613.925.0022

Toll-free: 1.855.925.0022

Fax: 613.925.0024

Email: transportation@steo.ca

Website: www.steo.ca

Inclement Weather Information: 1.866.629.0629 (updated by 6:15 a.m.)



**CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL
BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO**



**UPPER
CANADA**

District School Board

