

# STEO

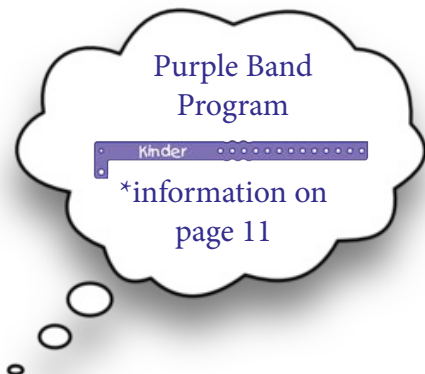
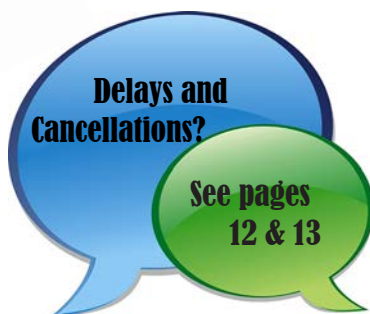
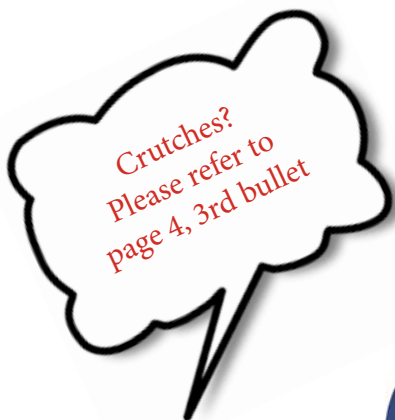
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION  
OF EASTERN ONTARIO



## Transportation Information and Guidelines for Students and Parents

[www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca)







## **Transportation Information and Guidelines for Students and Parents/Guardians**

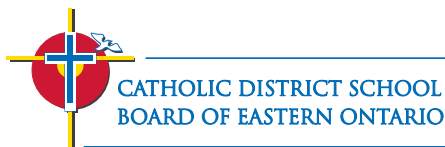
Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO) is the transportation consortium for the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) and the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB).

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

We ask that students, parents/guardians, teachers, principals, bus companies 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](http://www.steo.ca)**

**The information contained in this booklet is  
available in an accessible format upon request.**



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## **Guidelines for Parents/Guardians**

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 pick-up and drop-off within the same route, provided it is for five (5) consecutive days, upon approval by STEO.
- School bus drivers can only pick up 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 parents' 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, homework projects 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 conditions are not conducive 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 home.***

- 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.



- To reduce the risk of further injury, students using crutches are not permitted to ride the school bus. STEO must be notified and alternate transportation arrangements will be reviewed.
- Record the bus company and contact information, route number, stop location, pick-up and drop-off times for your child at the back of this booklet.
- Parents/guardians should not attempt to stop, delay or board the bus at any time. Please direct any questions or concerns to the bus company.
- 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, an authorized, responsible person must accompany your child to and from the bus stop. If this person is not at the stop to meet the child, 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 must ensure that the Purple Band, provided by the school, is securely attached to the handgrip of their child's backpack to enable drivers to quickly identify these students (***refer to the Purple Band Program on page 11***).
- Ensure that you meet your child on the same side of the street where he or she exits the school bus.
- ***Address Changes and Contact Information? Please Note: STEO is unable to make changes to student contact and address information. Notify the school as soon as possible of any changes to contact, address and/or caregiver information as it can take up to 3 business days to arrange transportation.***
- Complete a Life Threatening Emergency Medical Form if your child has a medical condition of which the school and bus company should be aware. Submit completed forms to the school annually.
- Make sure that your child's belongings are securely packed in their school bag/backpack.
- 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 which may result 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 Parents/Guardians of Children Requiring Special Needs Transportation**

- Always be aware of your child's bus company, route number and bus driver's name.
- Have your child ready for pick up at the same time each day.
- Talk to your child about appropriate behaviour while travelling on the school purpose vehicle;
  - Throwing objects inside or outside the vehicle is not permitted
  - Fighting, shouting or the use of obscene language is not permitted
- 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 use of the seat belt at all times.
- Place names on students' belongings, such as lunch boxes, hats, mittens etc. to avoid loss.
- Be aware of the procedures followed in cases of inclement weather or emergencies and have in place the appropriate arrangements for supervision, should your child be transported home earlier than usual.





# 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, from or after the bus.
- Wait at your designated stop in a safe place, back from the side of the road.
- Do not stand in the danger zone that surrounds the bus. The danger zone is anywhere close enough for you to touch the bus.



- When boarding, 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.
- When boarding and/or disembarking the bus, please refrain from using your cellphone.
- If you need to cross the street to get on the bus, 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. Remain in your assigned seat.
- Place your belongings under the seat or on your lap.
- Keep the aisle of the bus clear at all times.
- Do not place items or body parts out of the window.
- Throwing objects inside or outside of the bus is not permitted.
- Speak quietly; the driver needs to concentrate. Please remember that picture/video taking is a violation of the privacy of other students and that sharing photos/videos with others can be distracting for the driver.
- Fighting, shouting, or use of obscene language is not permitted.
- Be absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
- Ensure you are aware of all bus evacuation procedures.
- Dangerous or distracting objects are not permitted on the bus.
- Eating and drinking (this includes chewing gum) are not allowed on school vehicles at any time. This rule protects students and drivers that have food allergies and anaphylaxis, prevents choking, and maintains bus cleanliness.
- Be aware that other students and the bus driver may have sensitivities to scents such as perfume, etc.
- Smoking/vaping is not permitted on or in close proximity of the bus or bus stop. Please be mindful of the allergies and sensitivities of others.
- Always follow the bus driver's instructions.

## **RULES FOR LEAVING THE BUS SAFELY**

- Remain in your 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 oncoming traffic.
- Cross the street in single file.
- When getting off the bus, the people at the front exit 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.

- Sporting equipment including sports balls must be carried and kept in a sports bag at all times.
- 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 company 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.).
- For students requiring service animals, please contact the school and STEO for approval.

***\* In case of a dispute, the final decision as to what may or may not be transported rests with the bus company and STEO.***

## 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.



### 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 and October students participate in school bus emergency evacuation drills.

### TOKENS OF KINDNESS

Through STEO's Tokens of Kindness program, bus drivers are provided with 'bus tokens' inscribed with the words "an act of kindness can change the world." Drivers may distribute the tokens in recognition of acts of kindness, as a means to reinforce positive action on the bus.



## PURPLE BAND PROGRAM

A band on the handgrip of their backpack helps to ensure that our junior and senior kindergarten students will be met at the bus stop. The purple band is a quick visual tool that reminds bus drivers that the student with a tagged backpack needs their special attention, as well as guardian supervision at the drop-off point.

## 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 accountable 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 parents/guardians. This applies to school buses and vans.

## PROCESS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The driver will report the student/incident to the principal in writing. The principal will then notify the parents/guardians. Major incidents may result in immediate withdrawal of bus privileges.

The principal may withdraw the student's transportation privileges for a period of up to five (5) days. The principal will notify the school superintendent as well as the parents/guardians of the bus suspension.

### **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, STEO's Operations Manager and/or STEO's GM/CAO. The principal will notify the parents/guardians. Any incident considered a serious threat to bus or student security shall result in consequences in accordance with school board ***Safe Schools*** policies.

## **Video Cameras on School Buses**

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

## **Delays and Cancellations**

### **METHODS OF COMMUNICATING DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS**

STEO would like to advise students and parents/guardians that there are several methods that can be checked for bus cancellations:

1. Access STEO's website at **[www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca)**, and click on the link "Delays and Cancellations". **Cancellations** will be posted by 6:15 a.m.

2. Subscribe to STEO's Parent Portal for updates on delays and cancellations, specific to your child's transportation. Sign up at [www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca) under Parent Login.
3. Follow STEO on Facebook for updates on delays and cancellations and other messaging.
4. Follow @steo\_news on Twitter for updates on delays and cancellations.
5. Follow @steocancels on Twitter for cancellation notifications.
6. Call 1-866-629-0629 to access a pre-recorded message. During inclement weather, if transportation is cancelled, the message will be posted by 6:15 a.m.
7. Announcements regarding the cancellation of school buses and special vehicle transportation will be aired on local radio and television stations, beginning at 6:15 a.m.



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

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE**

- STEO will do everything reasonable to operate within the due bounds of safety. STEO will not knowingly take risks with your children, or with bus drivers and monitors.
- The school jurisdictions are separated into 18 zones, with a bus company as a weather captain in each zone.
- STEO receives real-time information regarding regional weather and road conditions from an established local precision weather advisor.



- Forecasted inclement weather information is verified the day before at 2:00 p.m., and depending on this forecast the bus companies may be notified.
  - Weather forecasts and radar activity are reviewed at 9:30 p.m. the night before and again at 4:00 a.m on the day of.
  - At 4:30 a.m. the bus company 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 or designate and the Operations Manager begin to receive phone calls from the weather captains for updates on conditions.
  - By 5:40 a.m. each school board's Director or designate is contacted to discuss a recommended decision.
  - At 5:45 a.m., the school boards, in consultation with STEO, make a decision whether or not transportation is cancelled for the day.
  - By 6:15 a.m., if transportation is cancelled, radio and TV stations are contacted. The cancellation page on STEO's website, as well as the message on the 1-866-629-0629 inclement weather phone number, is updated.
- \* ***Please note that when transportation is cancelled, generally schools remain open to provide programming. Confirm with your school.***

**Please check our website at [www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca) for a list of bus companies and their contact information.**

## WINTER SAFETY TIPS: STAY TOASTIE

**T**reat yourself. Food supplies heat to the body. Make sure to eat a well-balanced breakfast on cold winter days.

**O**ne is the chilliest number. Dress in several lighter layers. Ensure that your outer layer is windproof and waterproof.

**A**void exposing skin in cold temperatures. Cover your head, ears, nose, neck and hands.

**S**tay dry. Change out of wet clothing as soon as possible.

**T**oes are people too! Make sure that footwear is warm and waterproof. Like the rest of your clothes, layer your socks as well.

**I**ncubate. Seek shelter from wind and elements if possible. Ensure you choose a safe location in which to seek shelter.

**E**xit the situation. Take frequent breaks from outside activity or if the risk of frostbite is very high stay inside.

**The staff at STEO wishes everyone a safe and “toastie” winter!**



**Bus company name:**

**Bus company contact number:**

**Route number:**

**Pick-up time:**

**Drop-off time:**

## **Notes**

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**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](mailto:transportation@steo.ca)

**Website:** [www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca)

**Inclement Weather Information:** 1-866-629-0629 (updated by 6:15 a.m.)

