

1. My child has been denied transportation, but the bus is half empty. Why can't they ride?

Often referred to as "filling up the bus", this is a question we regularly receive from parents and community members. While your child's bus may not appear to be full, here are some important things to keep in mind:

- a. Not every student who is eligible for transportation rides the bus every day, but STSWR is still required to plan for their transportation because they are eligible under the board's transportation policy.*
- b. The number of students that can be loaded on a bus is based on capacity standards set by the industry.*
- c. STSWR plans based on 3 students per seat up to Grade 6, and 2 students per seat from Grade 7 - 12.*
- d. Providing ineligible students with "courtesy" transportation is not allowed under either board's transportation policy. This is because courtesy transportation has been identified by the Ministry of Education as an inefficient practice that adds to route times and increases the number of buses we have on the road.*

2. My youngest child is eligible for the bus, but my older child is not. What can I do?

The distance policy varies depending on School Board and Grade. Each School Board has their own distance policy which can be found here; <http://www.stswr.ca/policies/> under either WRDSB or WCDSB Transportation policies. In the case of two siblings in different grades having different eligibilities, it is up to the parent to decide how they get their children to school. No exceptions will be given to older siblings to ride with their younger sibling.

3. I am new to busing, what should I know for my child's first day?

Once you have received the busing information online (<https://bpweb.stswr.ca/StudentLogin.aspx>) or from the school, you will know where the assigned location and approximate time for the bus is. Be at the assigned location for the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. Line up to board the bus, and be sure traffic is clear if you need to cross any roadways. For younger JK and SK students we suggest that they sit close to the bus driver at the front of the bus. For more information on the responsibilities of different stakeholders see Roles and Responsibilities (#1) at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/StudentLogin.aspx>.

4. Can my child be picked-up or dropped off from a childcare address?

Yes. As long as the childcare is located at an address that is eligible for transportation from your child's school, and the arrangements are consistent - always pick-up from the designated address and/or dropped off at a designated address. To request an alternate pick-up or drop-off, please contact your school and provide the alternate childcare address. Once approved, you will receive updated transportation information.

5. My child has been hurt and cannot walk to school temporarily. What can I do? My child is on crutches, what do I do?

Please complete a special request form and submit it to your child's Principal (<http://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Special-Request-STSWR.pdf>). Once the request has been approved by the Principal and the designated Superintendent, STSWR will contact the school with your transportation information. Our policy on crutches can be found here; <http://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/5.7-Students-on-Crutches.pdf>

6. My child has been denied transportation, how do I appeal that decision?

The transportation appeal process can be found here; <http://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/STSWR-Appeal-Procedure.pdf>

7. How do you determine the distance to my child's school for transportation eligibility?

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) uses a Geographical Information System (GIS) to calculate the distance for transportation eligibility. Distances are measured from the end of your property to the closest access point to the school - not door to door. The maps used are provided by the Region of Waterloo, and include designated pathways and access points. To find your eligibility go here; <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Eligibility.aspx?Page=Transportation>

8. I have heard something about a walking school bus - what is it?

In 1992, Australian author, David Engwicht, introduced the 'Walking Bus' concept as a solution to the vicious school traffic cycle whereby parents drive their children to school because it is too dangerous for them to walk, increasing traffic, and forcing other parents to drive because it is now deemed too dangerous for their children to walk. The

Walking School Bus is a group of children who walk to school together. Parents or older students agree to be “walking leaders” and the group walks to school together, similar to a “carpool”. The group typically follows a specific route and schedule, which has designated “bus stops” that pick up students along the way. Walking School Buses can be tailored to be as formal or informal as needed by a school. This is a safe, convenient, fun, and healthy way for children to travel to school.

- A Bicycle Train is the same concept but instead of walking the students and adult(s) travel by bicycle.
- There are three steps to starting a Walking School Bus in your community:
 - 1) Invite families who live nearby to walk
 - 2) Pick a route to school and do a test walk
 - 3) Decide how often the group will walk together – have fun!
- For more information, visit the Active & Safe Routes to School – Walking to School Bus page (link to <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/walking-school-bus>) or contact your local Active & Safe Routes to School representative for more information:

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9. How does STSWR determine if there is a safe walking route to school?

STSWR works with the Region of Waterloo, local Municipalities and Townships to ensure that walking routes and paths meet specific safety criteria before being recommended by STSWR. The infrastructure needs to be adequate for the safe pedestrian traffic.

10. My child is in French Immersion at a school outside our area. Are they eligible for the bus?

No. The Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board have determined that students attending French Immersion from outside the school's regular attendance boundary are not eligible for transportation. Please refer to the board's transportation procedure for more information.

11. My child is eligible for busing; do I need to notify anyone that my child will not be riding?

To ensure that your child is not mistakenly placed on a bus, please complete the Transportation Do Not Ride form (<http://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/Do-Not-Ride-Form.pdf>) and return it to your child's school as soon as possible. Please note, if your child will occasionally be riding the bus, do not complete this form, it is only for students who will never be riding the bus. For safety reasons, it is highly recommended that young children have a consistent travel arrangement.

12. What school do I attend and am I eligible for busing?

a) To determine which school your child should attend check here;

<https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Eligibility.aspx?Page=School>

b) To determine Transportation Eligibility for your child's school, check here;

<https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Eligibility.aspx?Page=Transportation>

13. What is STSWR and what is the relationship to each School Board?

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) is a separate legal entity established by the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board to plan and oversee the delivery of student transportation in the Region. While the responsibility for establishing transportation policies remains with the individual school boards, STSWR is charged with applying the policies and procedures set by the boards in a consistent manner across the system. The STSWR staff is employed directly by STSWR, and management reports to a board of directors made up of senior administration from the two school boards.

14. I am moving or changing my sitter who do I contact?

To change a home address, childcare/babysitter address, contact information or any other personal information, please contact your Home school's main office. Student

Transportation Services of Waterloo Region arranges transportation based on the information provided by the school.

15. Can I make special arrangements or changes in my child's transportation directly with the bus driver?

No. Without a written notice from Student Transportation Services of Waterloo region, no bus driver is authorized to make changes to your child's bus stop or bus schedule. [To make changes to your pick up or drop off address, please contact your school.](#)

16. My child has forgotten an item on the bus. What can I do?

Contact the bus company for lost items. To do this you will need to know your child's bus route. To find this information you can log onto the Student Login at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/StudentLogin.aspx> If you know the Operator and route number, the Operator phone numbers can be found here; <http://www.stswr.ca/operators/>

17. How can I get information about the next school year?

The web site will provide a drop down that will allow you to select the current school year or next year's school year in order to retrieve school boundary and transportation information for your child. Attendance boundary information for the next school year is available around the beginning of February each year. You will be able to check next year's busing information the last week of August.

18. I have concerns about a bus operator/taxi cab driver. Who can I contact?

The safety of students is the number one priority for STSWR and the partner school boards. If you have concerns regarding a specific bus or taxi cab driver, please contact STSWR at 519-650-4934 x 221. If you suspect a driver is impaired or driving dangerously while operating a vehicle, please call 911 immediately.

19. Where can I go to see bus delays, cancellations or school closures?

STSWR will advise, via the media and the STSWR website, of any bus cancellations due to weather. In most cases these notifications will be sent out before 7am on the day of the cancellation. Should the weather deteriorate during the day causing an early dismissal, parents/guardian will be contacted by the school prior to the students being sent home. For the quickest updates, please follow us on Twitter [@STSWR](#), sign up for the subscription service (<http://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/Subscription-Service-Instructions.pdf>) or check the website at www.stswr.ca. For the latest daily delays, check the Delays and Cancellations at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Cancellations.aspx>.

20. How will my child know which bus to get on at school?

All vehicles have signs displayed in the window at the front of the bus indicating the route number. To find your child's route number:

- a. *Visit www.stswr.ca*
- b. *Click on the box with "Student Login, Which School Do I Attend, Transportation Eligibility"*
- c. *Click on the yellow box "Student Login" at the bottom of the page.*
- d. *Change the School Year to the year you are looking for (20152016)*
- e. *Enter your child's Ontario Education Number (OEN) - numbers only, no space, no dash. Please note that OENs are printed on report cards*
- f. *Enter your child's birth date (dd/mm/yyyy)*
- g. *Enter your street number (house number only)*
- h. *Select your child's school*
- i. *Each kindergarten student is issued a kindergarten tag at the school. Tags are fastened on backpacks with the PM stop location and route number facing outward. This allows staff to assist students in boarding the correct bus.*
- j. *Although it varies from school to school, bus lists are sometimes printed to support the teacher on duty in directing students toward the appropriate bus.*

21. How many students can fit onto a Regular School bus seat?

The number of students transported on a school bus will not exceed the manufacturer's capacity for that vehicle. Where practical bus seats will be loaded as follows:

- *JK to Grade 6 - 3 per seat*
- *Grade 7 to 12 - 2 per seat*

No students are permitted to stand on the bus.