

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR)

Policy & Procedures

Updated February 2025



Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region Inc.

Providing transportation for
the Waterloo Catholic District School Board
and the Waterloo Region District School Board.

OUR MISSION

We positively influence student's lives by coordinating their safe and efficient movement between home and school in support of their educational journey.

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THE TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OBTAINED IN THIS BOOKLET ARE PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND SHOULD BE KEPT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

Transportation Policy and Operating Procedure (IV-15)

The Education Act, section 190 (1) *Transportation of pupils:*

190 (1) A board may provide for,

(a) a pupil who is enrolled in a school that the board operates;

(a.1) a resident pupil of the board who is enrolled in a school operated by another board under an agreement between the boards;

(b) a pupil in respect of whom the Minister pays the cost of education under the regulations; and

(c) a child over two years of age who may, under the regulations, be admitted to a program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing,

transportation to and from the school that the pupil attends. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 190 (1); 1997, c. 31, s. 96 (1); 2016, c. 5, Sched. 8, s. 2.

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) and the School Boards (WCDSB & WRDSB) it serves recognize that although the Education Act places no mandatory responsibility on a board to provide transportation for students, there may be existing conditions that warrant transportation for certain students.

Transportation can be withdrawn for violation of the behavior code or changes to the distance criteria.



POLICY STATEMENT

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR), on behalf of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) and the Waterloo Regional District School Board, (WRDSB) is committed to the provision of transportation services subject to the following guidelines that place the primary focus on student safety, efficient service, and cost effectiveness.

ELIGIBILITY


1. Only students residing in Waterloo Region, registered, and attending a school operated by either WRDSB or WCDSB may be eligible for transportation, except where otherwise authorized by a Director of Education or designate.
2. Transportation may be provided to students as a result of;
 - a. Distance from school,
 - b. Hazardous walking conditions,
 - c. Special needs
 - d. Participation in educational excursions.
3. The distance guidelines defined by each School Board shall be used to determine eligibility. (See Appendix A)
4. All transportation measurements will be determined by STSWR and will be based on the shortest distance by road, path, or walkway from home to school or bus stop and are subject to a reasonable flexibility beyond the guidelines.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. **Designated Bus Stops**

Students will be required to walk to community bus stops. The distances from property to bus pick-up points are defined in Appendix A.
 2. **Special Considerations**

In consultation with the appropriate School Board Superintendent and STSWR, special consideration may be given;

 - a. Where traffic or other safety hazards exist, conditions to be considered are;
 - i. The presence or absence of traffic lights and crossing guards;
 - ii. The availability of walkways and sidewalks along major thoroughfares;
 - iii. Sight lines at crossing points;
 - iv. The presence or lack of protective barriers that may result in walking distances exceeding board policy.
 - b. Where special needs of a student requiring transportation are identified.
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c. Where a student has become temporarily non-ambulatory.

While there may be other medical conditions that exist, it is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to ensure the safe arrival of students who would not normally be eligible for bus transportation.

3. Traveling Times


Wherever possible, every effort will be made to ensure that students will not be on the bus longer than 60 minutes (one way).

4. Type of Transportation

STSWR will determine the type of transportation service to be provided in all cases. Transportation may be by school bus, van, taxi or through Grand River Transit (GRT).




RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

1. Parents/caregivers are responsible for the safety and conduct of their student prior to bus pick-up and after bus drop off.
 2. **Junior and Senior Kindergarten Students MUST BE MET** by a parent/caregiver, or an appropriately aged older sibling.
 3. Parents/caregivers of students in **Junior and Senior Kindergarten are REQUIRED to come to the bus door** and ask for their student(s) by name to promote safe dismissal.
 4. Parents/caregivers are responsible for their student knowing the safety precautions and behavior code as outlined in this document.
 5. Student/parents/caregivers will be held financially responsible for damage to the school bus resulting from improper behavior or carelessness.
 6. Parents/caregivers are not permitted to board the school bus. The only exception is a student with special needs that requires;
 - a. A Rupert's harness hooked in.
 - b. A seat belt buckled (excluding Wheelchairs).
 7. Parents/caregivers must be familiar with the [inclement weather procedures](#) and are responsible to monitor cancellation announcements. Cancellation announcements can be found at [STSWR Alerts](#), Twitter ([@STSWR](#)) or through media outlets.
 8. Parents/caregivers have the right to make the **final** decision in sending a student to school in the event of inclement weather.
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RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF TRANSPORTED STUDENTS

1. To ensure that a safe and secure environment is maintained, a school bus will be treated as an extension of the classroom. Improper conduct may result in the withdrawal of riding privileges by the School Principal or designate. Reinstatement will be at the discretion of the School Principal or designate after consultation with the student and parent or caregiver. Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to "Guidelines for Transported Students."
2. The use of [crutches](#) is not permitted on the bus for safety reasons.
3. Actual bus stop arrival times may fluctuate due to traffic conditions; it is recommended that students are ready and waiting to board the bus at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
4. Choose the safest walking route to and from the bus stop. Keep clear of the roadway and private property while waiting for the bus.
5. Make sure traffic is clear, or stopped, when crossing any roadway.
6. Line up and board the bus in an orderly manner.
7. Take a seat promptly and stay seated until the bus stops at your destination.
8. Place nothing in the aisle. Hold books, lunch boxes and other items on your lap.
9. Do not carry skates on the bus unless they are equipped with skate guards, or placed into a reinforced carrying bag, or wrapped securely. Other sports equipment such as toboggans, hockey sticks, skis, skateboards, scooters, long boards, etc. are not allowed on the bus.
10. Musical instruments to a maximum size of 18 inches by 10 inches by 10 inches (46 cm by 26 cm by 26 cm) are allowed on the bus. Instruments over this size are not permitted on the bus.
11. Always keep your entire body inside the bus.
12. When boarding the bus in the afternoon for the trip home, students first to leave the bus will occupy the front seats or sit in the seat assigned by the principal or designate.
13. If, upon leaving the bus, it is necessary to cross a roadway, do so when the stop arm is extended and the red signals on the bus are flashing, and traffic is stopped.

Since STSWR and the School Boards share the responsibility of a safe ride for all students on school buses, any student whose conduct endangers the safety or interferes with the comfort of others may have their riding privileges revoked. Courtesy and respect for others are to always prevail.



STUDENT CONDUCT ON VEHICLES

Rules of Conduct on the School Bus

1. Every student is responsible to the principal for their conduct on a school bus— Education Act Requirements for Students - Reg. 298, s. 23 (4c)
2. Students must act appropriately on the school bus, so they do not endanger the safety of themselves or others.
3. At all times, students must obey the driver who oversees the bus and all passengers. Safety patrollers may be present to assist the bus driver. Safety patrollers are trained in bus emergency procedures and their instructions should be respected in such circumstances.
4. Students are to sit where directed by the principal, designate or driver; and must remain seated until the end of the trip.
5. Students will be allowed to leave or board the bus only at their regular stop (i.e., at school and at home stop) unless the principal grants written permission.
6. Students will be allowed to ride only the bus assigned to them. Written permission from the principal must be obtained for any exceptions.
7. The following examples of behavior on a bus are always prohibited:
 - a. Eating food or drinking beverages
 - b. Unnecessary opening and closing of windows
 - c. Throwing items
 - d. Fighting, wrestling, yelling, and climbing
 - e. Bullying in any form
 - f. Smoking or vaping
 - g. Use, possession or sale of alcohol or illicit drugs; or the possession of weapons or items that are intended to be used as a weapon
 - h. Using obscene or profane language or harassment of any kind
8. STSWR and the School Boards it serves consider parents/caregivers/caregivers responsible for the safety and conduct of their student before they are picked up and after they have been discharged from a school bus.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE AND SUSPENSION OF RIDING PRIVILEGES


Disciplinary Procedure

1. The driver will warn any student who misbehaves on a school bus.
2. If the misbehavior is repeated, the driver shall submit a written report to the principal, who shall interview the student and may warn parents/caregivers/caregivers, in writing, that further repetition could lead to the withdrawal of riding privileges.
3. If a suspension of riding privileges is to be applied to a student, the parents/caregivers/caregivers are to be notified, in writing, of the reason and duration of the suspension of riding privileges.

NOTE: The suspension of riding privileges by the principal will be for a period of one (1) to twenty (20) days for any one offence, at the discretion of the principal.

- a. STSWR, the operator, and the driver of the bus will receive a copy of the letter.

NOTE: The principal will consult with the student and parents/caregivers before riding privileges are reinstated.

4. Where a suspension of riding privileges exceeds twenty (20) days, approval of the School Board is required.
 5. If the Principal feels that the misbehavior is sufficiently serious to suspend the student's riding privileges immediately, contact will be made by telephone to the parties noted above. Written documentation must follow.
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INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE

During the winter season, there are days when school buses cannot safely operate due to fog, freezing rain, snow or other hazardous conditions. This may be confined to certain areas or necessitate a complete system shutdown for the day.

School Bus Cancellation - Before School Starts

Bus operators will consult with their drivers and other monitors to determine if road conditions are safe. If conditions appear unsafe, they will contact STSWR for approval to cancel buses.

A “frigid temperature” assessment applies when the temperature reaches -35°C with wind-chill or colder. The General Manager of STSWR, or designate, will check, and assess the temperatures in the Waterloo region using Environment Canada’s wind-chill index before 5:30 am. If the temperature is forecasted to reach or exceed -35°C with wind-chill at 7:00 am, STSWR will inform School Board directors or their designates that buses will not operate. Schools will remain open for student drop off at parents/caregivers’ discretion.

If there is a decision to cancel, STSWR will contact the following radio stations for widespread broadcast by 6:00 AM:


CHYM	FM 96.7	Waterloo Region
570 News	AM 570	Waterloo Region
Virgin Radio	FM 105.3	Waterloo Region
Dave Rocks	FM 107.5	Waterloo Region
Magic 106	FM 106.1	Guelph
Country	FM 106.7	Waterloo Region
Mix (CKWR)	FM 98.5	Waterloo Region
The Beat	FM 91.5	Waterloo Region
Faith FM	Fm 94.3	Waterloo Region

Cancellations are posted on STSWR’s website (www.stswr.ca) and social media pages. Email/text notifications may also be sent to those who have created a Parent Portal account on the STSWR website.

Cancellation information is also posted on school board websites at www.wcdsb.ca or www.wrdsb.ca

If the buses are cancelled, they are cancelled **all day**. Parents/caregivers of bused students who attend school when buses are cancelled must arrange for transportation home at the end of the school day.

Unless a system closure has been announced, all schools in WCDSB and WRDSB will be open during regular hours. All extended day childcare programs will be open as well.



Early School Dismissal

Emergency dismissal procedures for bused or non-bused students may be implemented differently by each school. It is the principal's responsibility to prepare a plan for notifying each family of the early dismissal and the related procedures. When early dismissal is warranted, bused students may be dismissed from school at any time during the school day as determined by STSWR.

Non-bused students will be dismissed only at lunch or the normal dismissal times at end of the school day.

If a system-wide dismissal is called, information will be announced by the radio stations.

Suggested procedure for parents/caregivers of student who ride school buses:

Parents/caregivers are the primary decision makers regarding the safety of their student.

- a. If you are unable to be home for early dismissal, plan to safeguard your student at a neighbor's home.
- b. Please make sure your student is aware of what they are to do in the event of an early dismissal.
- c. Call the school only when necessary, so that you will not tie up the school telephone.

IF SCHOOLS ARE OPENED AND BUSES ARE RUNNING, PARENTS/CAREGIVERS MAY ASSESS THE CONDITIONS AND IF THEY BELIEVE CONDITIONS TO BE UNSAFE, THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO KEEP THEIR STUDENT AT HOME.



TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OF WATERLOO REGION (STSWR)

519-744-7575 x 0 (For All Inquiries)

BUS COMPANIES

Elliott Coach (Breslau)	519-648-9548
Elliott Coach (Elmira)	519-669-5198
Sharp Bus Lines	519-896-2822
Campeau	519-893-9453
Voyago	519-593-1008

TAXI COMPANIES

City Cabs (KW)	519-747-7777
Golden Triangle Taxi	519-740-2222
United Taxi	519-888-9999
Waterloo Taxi	519-888-7777



Appendix A: Walking Distance

Distance to School

The following distance guidelines are used to determine transportation eligibility:

A. Waterloo Region District School Board

Grade	Walking Distance to School
Junior & Senior Kindergarten	0.8 kilometres
Grade 1 to Grade 8	1.6 kilometres
Grade 9 to Grade 12	3.2 kilometres

B. Waterloo Catholic District School Board

Grade	Walking Distance to School
JK to Grade 3	0.8 kilometres
Grade 4 to Grade 8	1.6 kilometres
Grade 9 to Grade 12	3.2 kilometres

Bus Stops

Urban Areas

Students are required to walk to community bus stops. Maximum walking distances from property to bus pick-up points are as follows:

Grade	Walking Distance to Closest Bus Stop
Junior & Senior Kindergarten	0.8 kilometres
Grade 1 to Grade 8	1.6 kilometres
Grade 9 to Grade 12	3.2 kilometres

Rural Areas

Rural students as a rule will be picked up or dropped off at their laneway. Where this is not possible, they will be required to walk up to 0.5 kilometres from their property to a bus pick-up point.

