



Elementary School Bus Safety

Every school day, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region is responsible for the safe transportation of over 30,000 Waterloo Region District School Board students to and from school on close to 820 school bus routes and on municipal transit and in taxis.

All parents/guardians share in this responsibility by:

- > assisting their child in organizing and securing belongings before leaving home;
 - > removing all long drawstrings and toggles from outer clothing to prevent these from being caught in handrails and doors;
 - > ensuring their child's safety while getting to and from the school vehicle pick-up/drop-off points;
 - > being at the pick-up/drop-off points each day or arranging for a responsible adult to be there;
- Please note: kindergarten students will not be dropped off at the drop-off points unless there is an adult present or other arrangements have been made.*
- > supporting the enforcement of school vehicle safety rules and procedures;
 - > arranging for emergency care should the school have to close early and making sure their child and the school know the details.

Vehicle safety is reviewed with students each term. Vehicle evacuation drills are conducted annually through our schools. Parents/guardians can help ensure safe student transportation by reviewing and discussing safety rules and procedures with their children on a regular basis.

At the Bus Stop

Parents/guardians should instruct their children to:

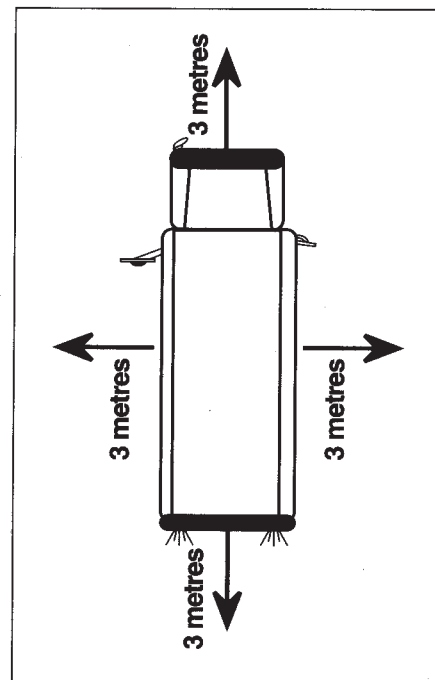
- > organize and adequately secure belongings before leaving home;
- > arrive at the designated pick-up point 5 minutes ahead of the scheduled pick-up time;
- > wait in an orderly fashion well back from the side of the road;
- > respect the private property at the bus stop;
- > recognize that a danger zone exists in the immediate vicinity of school buses;
- > wait until the school bus driver signals to them, if they need to cross the road to board the bus.

Riding School Vehicles

Students must:

- > board the vehicle in single file, with younger children first, and use the handrail;
- > walk directly to their seat as specified by the driver and sit down;
- > remain seated until ready to leave the school vehicle;
- > never smoke, eat or drink on the school vehicle;
- > keep books and parcels on their lap and keep aisles clear at all times;
- > avoid distracting or disturbing the driver (students listening to portable radios must use headsets);
- > open windows only with driver's permission and keep hands, feet, arms and head inside the school vehicle;
- > never throw objects inside the school vehicle or out the windows;
- > promptly obey the driver's directions, (or the direction of the school safety patrol, if present);
- > use emergency equipment or exits only in the case of genuine emergency.

School Bus Danger Zone



Getting Off School Vehicles

Students must:

- > have their belongings organized and adequately secured before arriving at their stop;
- > remain seated until the vehicle comes to a full stop;
- > walk to the front of the vehicle and use the handrail while exiting in single file;
- > get off the vehicle only at their designated stop unless permission is granted by the principal;
- > immediately move away from the vehicle, recognizing the danger zone close to the vehicle;
- > when required to cross the road establish full eye contact with the driver, wait for the driver to signal, check traffic in both directions and then cross the road in front of the school vehicle.

When Safety Rules are Broken

It is essential parents/guardians support enforcement of school bus safety rules. When student behaviour is inappropriate:

- > the driver first talks with the student;
- > if the student does not co-operate, the driver reports the student to the principal, detailing the incident; the driver continues to seek student co-operation;
- > the principal records all such reports and takes whatever corrective action is warranted; this could include suspension of transportation privileges.

School Bus Drivers

School bus drivers are dedicated professionals who must meet Ministry of Transportation standards. In addition to student safety and behaviour, they must deal with all types of weather and traffic conditions, other motorists and the danger zone around their own vehicle.

First Riders Program

This program is specifically designed for kindergarten students and their families to become familiar with riding a school bus and school bus safety rules. The Board invites all interested families to participate the last Sunday of August each year. A notice will be sent home to the parents/guardians of all registered junior and senior kindergarten students during the summer months indicating the locations and registration information.

School Vehicles

School vehicles used to transport students must meet federal and provincial standards and all licensing requirements. They are subjected to mechanical safety inspections twice annually and drivers do a daily circle check before starting out. All vehicles have two-way radios and local bus companies maintain radio contact while vehicles are on the road.

School buses are large vehicles which require more space to maneuver. Large mirrors are required to assist drivers with blind spots. The Ontario Highway Traffic Act requires motorists to stop when the school bus flashing overhead lights and stop arm are activated.

Most students are transported on conventional school buses, but school purpose vehicles, taxis and para-transit services are also used.

Special needs units, school purpose vehicles, vans and taxis are equipped with seat belts although school and transit buses are not. Passenger loads are designed to provide a seat space for each student on a school bus. Public transit permits standing on buses.

Bus Patrols

Many elementary school bus routes have safety patrollers on board. These students assist other students when embarking/disembarking, and provide support to bus drivers in the event of an emergency situation. They receive training each fall in sessions conducted by the Waterloo Regional Police Service, Municipal Fire Departments and Regional Ambulance.

Further information

- > Call your school
- > Call Student Transportation Services at 519 650-4934
4275 King Street East, Unit 130, Kitchener, ON N2P 2E9
- > Visit the Board's web site at www.wrdsb.ca or Student Transportation Services web site at www.stswr.ca

