

## Ottawa Student Transportation Authority

### TRANSPORTING EQUIPMENT ON BUSES

In the interest of safety, only certain equipment is allowed on school vehicles, under the following conditions:

1. Musical equipment must be housed in cases and should be kept on the student's lap whenever possible.
2. Ice skates must be carried in a sports bag, or tied together with the blades covered, and kept on the floor at the student's feet.
3. Parents are expected to provide transportation for their children when bulky or large items such as projects and sports equipment (i.e. skis) must be taken to and from school.

### WHAT DRIVERS NEED TO KNOW WHEN STOPPING FOR A SCHOOL BUS

By law, traffic in both directions must stop any time a school bus is stopped with the overhead red lights flashing and stop arm activated.



**This law applies everywhere**, regardless of the posted speed limit – on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets. The only exception is when the road is divided by a median strip separating traffic travelling in opposite directions.

Motorists on any highway approaching a stopped school bus with its overhead alternating red signal lights flashing must always stop at least 20 metres (65 feet) before reaching the bus. Motorists may not proceed until the school bus resumes motion and the red lights have stopped flashing.

### CANCELLATIONS/INCLEMENT WEATHER



From time to time, poor road conditions due to inclement weather force the cancellation of our transportation services; these cancellations apply to the whole day.

In such cases, OSTA staff is in contact with various resources including school bus operators, the Ottawa Police Services, as well as other local school boards to assess road and weather conditions.

Details of cancellation decisions are posted on the OSTA website by 6:00 A.M. the day of a cancellation, broadcast over local radio stations, or may be found on member Board's websites.

Parents should also monitor weather conditions and, in the event that poor weather conditions may force the cancellation of school bus services, plan ahead with an alternative arrangement for your child for the day.

### WEBSITES

**Ottawa Student Transportation Authority:**

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

**Ottawa Catholic School Board:**

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

**Ottawa-Carleton District School Board:**

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

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

It is important that you always know your child's school bus route number and the name and telephone number of the operator for the route. You should be calling the school bus operator in the event that your child leaves something on the school bus, or in the event of an emergency.

Your child should always be dressed appropriately for the weather. From time to time, school bus vehicles may be delayed due to weather or road conditions so please ensure that your children are dressed so they can comfortably wait for their bus under all conditions.

It is also important to talk to your children about an alternate plan in the event that the bus does not arrive, or they miss their school bus.

We would like to remind parents that drawstrings on jackets, long scarves and other clothing items can pose a danger to children, as the potential exists for long drawstrings, scarves or oversize toggles to get caught on bus and/or playground equipment. Please check your child's clothing to help ensure their safety.



**OSTA**

Ottawa Student  
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# School Bus Safety

## A Message to Parents



The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) manages and facilitates the delivery of student transportation services for the more than 60,000 students of both the Ottawa Catholic and Ottawa-Carleton District School Boards.

The Consortium works with both School Boards to develop student transportation policies and regulations in order to promote and ensure the safety of the students; this includes school bus safety workshops and ongoing school bus safety awareness programs such as the annual Region-wide School Bus Safety Awareness Day held each August.

One element of OSTA's school bus safety program is the important role parents share in reinforcing school bus safety. Please take the time to review the following safety procedures with your child several times throughout the school year.

### BUS STOP LOCATIONS

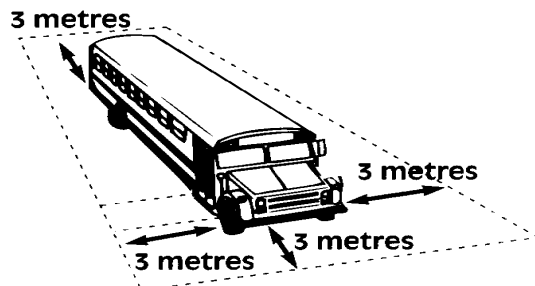
- Students should arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled pick up time and properly dressed for the weather;
- Children should wait in a safe place, well back from the side of the road;
- If students must cross the road to board the bus, wait until the bus has arrived and all traffic has stopped; then wait for the signal from the school bus driver before crossing.  
**Walk, don't run.**
- Hold the handrail, board the bus in single file, without pushing or shoving.

The safety of children getting to and from bus stops and while waiting at school bus stop locations requires the consistent and co-operative effort of parents and/or caregivers.

In some instances, children are left unattended as parents are not available. Parents are strongly urged to be at the pick-up and drop-off points each day or arrange for a responsible adult to be there. There is no substitute for adult supervision in student safety.



### SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONE



It is important for all parents and students to recognize that a danger zone exists in the immediate vicinity of school buses. This area is generally defined as a three-metre perimeter around the bus.

At every opportunity, students must be reminded to stay clear of the danger zone. Your assistance in helping your child recognize and keep clear of this area at all times is paramount to a sound school bus safety program.

Please remind your child to never linger or run behind or in front of the school bus to pick up something that was dropped in the Danger Zone.

### RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS

Kindly review the following good school bus passenger rules with your child:

- Take your seat right away and remain seated until leaving the bus.
- Eating or drinking is not permitted on the school bus.
- Aisles are to be kept clear at all times. Books and parcels should be kept on your lap.
- Avoid distracting or disturbing the driver.
- Do not use abusive or obscene language.
- Never throw objects inside the school bus or out the windows.
- Windows should only be opened with the permission of the driver. Keep your hands, feet, arms and head inside the school bus at all times.
- Promptly obey the driver's instructions.
- Always treat your driver with respect and courtesy.

### GETTING OFF THE SCHOOL BUS

Students should always remember to:

- 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 when getting off the bus.
- Get off the bus only at their designated stop.
- Move away from the school bus, remembering the danger zone.
- Walk straight to the shoulder of the road or sidewalk. If you must cross the road, count out ten steps along the curb then wait until your driver gives you the signal to cross the road in front of the bus, after checking traffic in both directions. If you do not have to cross the road, wait away from the curb and do not start for home until the school bus has left the area.

### TRANSPORTATION PRIVILEGES

Transportation service is not considered to be a right of every student, but rather a privilege accorded to certain students.

In Ontario, School Boards are not required to provide transportation services. The Education Act (*RSO 1990, Chapter e.2, section 190*) states that school boards "may" provide transportation for pupils. A student's eligibility for transportation is determined in accordance with the policies established by OSTA's member Boards, which can be found on their websites.

In dealing with safety and disciplinary issues, a school bus is considered an extension of the classroom. If a passenger misbehaves on a school bus, the Principal has the authority, under policies established by the School Board, to discipline the child and even withhold transportation services.

At any time, a child's transportation privileges may be suspended due to inappropriate behaviour while on the school bus.