

## **Before the Bus Arrives in the Morning & After Drop-Off in the Afternoon: What Parents Need to Keep in Mind**

School busing is the safest form of student transport available. Each day, more than 28,000 students are transported to and from school across STSCO's 9500 square km jurisdiction.

Ensuring the safe transport of each and every child is a shared responsibility which brings together the efforts of students, their parents and guardians, school staff, bus drivers, bus companies, the School Boards and STSCO.

For the information of parents and guardians, STSCO would like to further explain each of our responsibilities.

Once a child boards a school bus in the morning and until they are dropped-off in the afternoon, bus drivers, bus companies, school staff, STSCO and the School Boards are responsible for each student's well-being and care.

**Bus drivers** are trained by their companies to drive large school buses under all kinds of road and weather conditions while carefully stopping to pick-up and drop-off as many as 72 students per trip. They are also skilled in monitoring student behaviour to ensure that their passengers have an enjoyable ride to and from school. All of our bus drivers do an admirable job.

**STSCO** is responsible for overseeing the whole transportation system for the School Boards and planning bus routes and stops for students. STSCO staff try to place bus stops in central locations which can best serve nearby students and which are located in safe position relative to sightlines for traffic in the area and relative to students having sufficient space to safely stand at the stop while waiting for the bus (i.e. at the entrance of a driveway at the stop location).

**School staff** oversees the loading and unloading of buses at the school. The School Principal is responsible for dealing with any student behaviour issues which may arise on a bus, from time to time, and which may be reported by the bus driver or other students.

**Parents and Guardians** are responsible for their children before they board the school bus in the morning and after they depart the bus in the afternoon. These are critical times for students as this is when they are on their own and outside of the safety of the school bus vehicle itself. To assist you in managing your responsibilities in this regard, STSCO would like to provide you with the following reminders.

1. Parents and guardians must ensure that, should they deem their children too young or otherwise not capable of safely walking to and from their assigned bus stop, they accompany them or arrange for another responsible adult or older student to accompany their children.

2. It is Board and Bus Company procedure that younger students (i.e. JK-Grade 3) be met at their bus stop by a parent or guardian, or that suitable, predetermined arrangements be in place whereby another responsible adult or older student meets the children or accompanies them from the bus stop to their end destination (i.e. their home).
3. In the event that a bus driver has a concern about dropping a younger student off at a stop in the afternoon because they are not sure if a responsible party is there to accompany them home, they will err on the side of caution and keep the student on the bus pending contact with their bus company office and subsequent resolution of the situation via a responsible party accepting the student.
4. In some cases, students may access school-based daycare facilities in the morning or afternoon and possibly on varying days of the week. This means that they may not consistently ride their school bus to and from home. As a result, the individual scheduling of bus use adds a complicating factor to transport arrangements, especially for very young students. Therefore, parents and guardians must ensure that they fully communicate the child's schedule to school and daycare officials, as well as the bus driver, in order that the schedule can be carefully followed.

It is very important that we all keep our responsibilities in mind in order that we maintain our safe and effective student transportation system. In doing so, we will all contribute to making sure that every child gets to school ready to learn in the morning and, in the afternoon, returns home in the same frame of mind.

Thank you for your assistance.

Joel Sloggett,  
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STSCO