



## YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

### *Policy and Procedure #680.0, Student Transportation*

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#### **Executive Summary**

#### **Policy Statement**

The Student Transportation policy and procedure outline eligibility criteria for the provision of Board transportation services for students in the York Region District School Board.

#### **Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities Under this Policy**

- Director of Education
- Board of Trustees
- Associate Director and Chief Financial Officer
- Superintendents of Education
- Principals
- Student Transportation Services
- Parents
- Students
- Student Services Coordinators
- Child Care Coordinators
- Managers, Student Transportation Services
- Student Transportation Planners
- School Bus Operators and Drivers

#### **Relationship to Board Priorities How is this policy and/or procedure related to Board priorities?**

The Student Transportation policy and procedure supports student success and well-being and the stewardship of Board resources by ensuring safe and supportive schools (including transportation to and/or from school) and demonstrating professionalism and accountability for high standards of practice in all Board operations.

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term “parents” refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedure



# Board Policy #680.0

## Student Transportation

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### **Policy Statement**

The York Region District School Board recognizes that transportation to and/or from school is a shared responsibility between the Board, students and parent(s)/guardian(s). Under the [Education Act](#), school boards may provide transportation service to and/or from school. The Board endeavours to provide service through funding grants provided by the Ministry of Education for this purpose.

### **Application**

Eligibility for transportation to and/or from a student's designated home school is based on the following.

#### *Transportation Zones*

An area eligible for school vehicle transportation based upon distances designated by the Board.

- Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 – a child who lives more than 1.2 kilometres from the school is eligible for Board-provided transportation;
- Grade 4 to Grade 8 – a child who lives more than 1.6 kilometres from the school is eligible for Board-provided transportation; and
- Grades 9 to 12 – a secondary student living more than 3.2 kilometres from the nearest secondary school in an area not served by public transit is eligible for Board-provided transportation.

A secondary school student served by public transit is **not** eligible for Board-provided transportation.

Measurements to establish eligibility, in accordance with transportation zones are completed by Student Transportation Services and are taken from the edge of a student's residence to the closest access to the school property. Measurements are taken along pedestrian routes within a municipality and use roadways, municipal walkways and parks.

In circumstances where students are deemed to be ineligible to receive Board-provisioned transportation as outlined above, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student to determine and provide the most appropriate and safe means of arrival to and/or departure from school.

### **Responsibilities**

*The Board of Trustees is responsible for:*

- establishing Board policy that governs student transportation;
- ensuring trustee representation on the Joint Board Consortium;
- forwarding operational matters related to student transportation, including, but not limited to, eligibility, safety concerns and service issues to the local supervisory officer of education;
- understanding that the provision of transportation services is considered annually as part of the Board Budget approval process;
- reviewing the Student Transportation policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle; and
- understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Student Transportation policy, where applicable.

*The Director of Education is responsible for:*

- implementing and operationalizing the Student Transportation policy.

### **Definitions**

#### *Designated Home School*

The school to which a student is assigned by the Board to attend for regular programming (English track) based on the student's home address. Transportation zones apply.

#### *School Bus Stops*

Centralized designated locations for the pick-up and drop-off of students. The factors to determine school bus stops are student safety, bus route efficiency and economy.

#### *Eligible Students*

Students who live within the approved transportation zone for their designated home school or are attending an optional program for which the Board of Trustees has approved transportation.

#### *Exceptional Students*

For transportation purposes, exceptional students are those students deemed to require transportation by Student Services, as part of their Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). Exceptional students receive transportation to a placement in a special education program determined by the IPRC in accordance with Board policies.

#### *Optional Program*

A program which students may choose to attend. An optional program is not Ministry-mandated, but offered by the Board and may or may not be located at the student's designated home school.

Students attending optional programs do **not** receive transportation unless approved by the Board of Trustees or if the program is located at a student's designated home school. In all cases, transportation zones apply. Transportation to optional programs is reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Board's Budget process.

#### *French Immersion*

An optional program for which the Board of Trustees has approved transportation as follows:

- elementary students who live within the transportation zone of the French Immersion program servicing their designated home school; and
- secondary students who are not considered transit served and who live within the transportation zone as determined by Student Transportation Services.

#### *Public Transportation*

Municipal/regional transit service (YRT/VIVA/Go Transit/TTC).

### *Ride Time*

The time a student spends on a bus from the school bus stop. The walking time to and from the school bus stop is not included.

Ride times on public or Board-provided transportation exceeding approximately 60 minutes would be considered exceptional circumstances.

### *Transit Served Student*

A pupil of the Board who has access to public transit to travel to and/or from school and unless under exceptional circumstances:

- lives within 1.2 kilometres from a public transit stop as measured by Student Transportation Services;
- regularly spends 75 minutes or less traveling to or from school; and
- requires no more than three vehicle transfers traveling to or from school.

### *Student Transportation Services (STS)*

A joint venture between the Catholic and public school boards in York Region. The mandate of STS is to provide safe, efficient and reliable transportation for all eligible students.

### *Student Transfers*

Students who attend a school outside of their designated home school are considered student transfers and are **not** eligible for transportation. Policy and procedure #108.0, [Student Accommodation – Attendance Areas and Student Transfers](#), addresses student transfers.

### *Transportation*

In most instances, transportation refers to home to school busing provided by STS. Transportation is provided for students who live within the grade appropriate transportation zone for their designated home school attendance area or an optional program to which the Board of Trustees has approved transportation. While a student's home or caregiver's address may be used to determine bus eligibility, either address must be:

- used consistently;
- within the school boundary; and
- within the transportation zone.

### *Walking Distances to School Bus Stops*

For designated home schools, walking distances to school bus stops shall not exceed 400 metres for elementary students and 600 metres for secondary students. Walking distances are measured by Student Transportation Services using the most direct walking route (which may include pathways) from the edge of a student's residence to the closest school bus stop.

## **Legislative Context**

[Education Act](#)

## **Related Documents**

[School Admission](#)

[Safe Arrivals and Departures – Elementary Students](#)

[Student Health Supports](#)

## **Department**

Administrative Services

Business Services

Education and Community Services

## **History**

Approved 1992

Working Document: December 2017

Revised 1998, 2006, 2011, July 2018, June 2021, August 2023



# Board Procedure #680.0

## Student Transportation

This procedure outlines how the York Region District School Board, staff members, and Student Transportation Services (STS) provide transportation services to eligible York Region District School Board students.

### **Responsibilities**

*The Director of Education shall:*

- allocate staff and resources to support the Student Transportation procedure.

*The Associate Director of Education and Chief Financial Officer shall:*

- support Student Transportation Services in conjunction with the York Catholic District School Board;
- facilitate communication between trustees, superintendents, principals and Student Transportation Services;
- make decisions about temporary transportation as required; and
- ensure appropriate decisions are made with respect to new and/or emerging transportation issues.

*Superintendents of Education shall:*

- recommend temporary transportation to the Associate Director of Education and Chief Financial Officer; ;
- respond to concerns raised by trustees and parent/community members about safety, and consistently apply the transportation policy and procedure; and
- communicate between and among trustees, Student Transportation Services, principals and the community.

*Principals shall:*

- ensure that the student registration system has current student data;
- confirm transportation eligibility as provided by the Manager of Student Transportation Services (STS);
- contact the bus vendors and the student transportation planner early in the school year to arrange a meeting with bus drivers to review the responsibilities of drivers;
- identify to STS, any students with known health conditions that may require special consideration affecting transportation, and as deemed necessary, supply a medical plan as defined by Policy #662.0, [Student Health Supports](#) and related procedures;
- provide each student eligible for transportation with information related to appropriate student conduct while on the school bus;
- dealing with all problems of student discipline on Board-provided transportation services;
- provide parents with information regarding child care centres that are within walking distance to the school or to which STS will provide transportation;
- ensure all students and parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware that every student is responsible to the principal of the school for his or her conduct while traveling on the school bus;
- validate eligible riders when requested by Student Transportation Services;
- apply disciplinary action in accordance with Board policies and procedures and the school's Code of Conduct in matters that occur on Board provided transportation;
- refer requests for temporary transportation to the superintendent of education;
- communicate with bus drivers about which students have been approved for temporary transportation;

- establish a process for the approval of alternate bus stops when in compelling circumstances a request is made for a student to embark or disembark the bus at an established stop other than the one to which the student is assigned;
- notify STS if there are concerns regarding a school bus driver;
- consistently communicate the policy and procedure to students, parents and the community;
- manage daily school-related operational issues and reporting any concerns to Student Transportation Services; and
- communicate that transporting students to and/or from field trips and extra-curricular activities is the responsibility of the student and parent and not Student Transportation Services.

*Student Services Coordinators shall:*

- request transportation for exceptional students, as required;
- forward to STS the required transportation forms, safety plans and emergency medical plans which outline specific transportation needs of each eligible student;
- forward to STS a detailed request for transportation for students attending facilities other than York Region public schools; and
- ensure that the responsibilities for school staff members and parents/guardians are clear with respect to securing and releasing restraints when required for the safety of students with special needs, as bus drivers are not responsible for securing and releasing restraints.

*The Child Care Coordinator shall:*

- provide the principal with current information regarding child care centres that are within the school's non-transportation zone or to which Student Transportation Services will provide transportation.

*The Manager of Student Transportation Services shall:*

- identify students eligible to receive transportation;
- establish and communicate processes for rider validation on school buses;
- ensure that students in Grades JK to 8 do not spend more than 45 minutes travelling in a school bus to or from school, and shall not schedule any pick-up more than 60 minutes prior to school start time (unless under exceptional circumstances);
- ensure that students in Grades 9 - 12 do not spend more than 60 minutes travelling in a vehicle to or from school, and shall not schedule any pick-up more than 75 minutes prior to school start time (unless under exceptional circumstances);
- approve, on recommendation of the principal, requests for transportation for students with dependent children provided that a child care program stop does not delay unreasonably or necessitate re-routing a bus;
- cancel Board-provisioned transportation region-wide in circumstances of inclement weather when road or weather conditions make it impossible to operate a school bus or taxi safely; and
- notify the media regarding the cancellation of Board-provisioned transportation on inclement weather days and ensure notification is posted on the Student Transportation Services website.

*Student Transportation Services (STS) is responsible for:*

- the provision of transportation services for all students deemed to be eligible;
- providing safe, efficient and reliable transportation for students;
- establishing and managing bus routes;
- resolving school bus service or safety concerns; and
- ensuring the seating capacity of a school vehicle is limited to the manufacturer's rating.

*Student Transportation Planners shall:*

- establish bus routes and school bus stops to provide home to school transportation for students; and
- inform schools, parents/guardians, students, and bus operators of the bus route schedules and bus stop locations.

*School bus vendors shall:*

- employ drivers properly licensed to drive school buses;
- ensure bus drivers participate in meetings with principals to review the responsibilities of the driver of a school bus;
- where a school bus is involved in an accident, or where a child is injured while boarding the bus, while on the bus, or when leaving the bus, promptly notify the principal and Student Transportation Services and provide them with a written report on the accident; and
- advise the Manager of Student Transportation Services prior to 5:30 a.m. if road or weather conditions make it impossible to operate a bus safely.

*School bus drivers shall:*

- adhere to the schedule established for the route and advise the operator when it has not been possible to keep within that schedule;
- meet with the school principal as requested to review the responsibilities of drivers;
- at all times be aware that they are primarily responsible to the school bus operator and that, within the limits of authority delegated to them by the operator, they're is responsible to the principal;
- recognize that age-appropriate arrangements will be made by parent(s)/guardian(s) with regard to the drop-off and pick-up of their child(ren) at school bus stops;
- be responsible to the principal for maintaining proper student conduct on a school bus at all times;
- report promptly to the school principal problems of student discipline on the bus;
- determine appropriate action(s), in consultation with the principal, operator and/or Manager of Student Transportation Services, if a disciplinary issue arises.
- report to the principal concerns about the eligibility of riders on the school bus;
- ensure that all students;
  - are seated while on the bus, and
  - have exited by the end of the bus route;
- report to the school bus operator if the number of students exceeds the specified capacity of the bus;
- not restrict pick-ups or drop-offs unless directed by the principal or STS;
- let students disembark the bus only when the situation is considered safe and then is responsible for signaling the student to cross the road where applicable;
- if conditions at the school bus stop appear to the driver to be unsafe or unusual, return the child to the school under the principal's care;
- where a school bus is involved in an accident, or where a child is injured while boarding the bus, while on the bus, or when leaving the bus, promptly notify the school bus operator;
- if an incident occurs on the way to school, transport the student to school and report the incident to the principal and operator immediately; and
- if an incident occurs on the way home from school, provide transportation to school the next school day for the student(s) involved unless given direction by the principal, operator or STS not to do so.

*Students with dependent children shall:*

- if transportation is approved by STS, provide an appropriate child seat if necessary for their child.



*Students are responsible for:*

- appropriate behaviour while riding the school bus in accordance with Board policies and procedures and their school's Code of Conduct; and
- riding a school bus only when eligible under the Board policy or when temporary service has been approved.

*Parents shall:*

- adhere to the Safe Arrivals and Departures policy and procedure;
- refer to Board Policy and Procedure #108, [Student Accommodation – Attendance Areas and Student Transfers](#) in the following situations;
  - if they wish to have their child attend an optional program offered in a school other than their designated home school,
  - if they wish to transfer their child to another special education program other than the one offered;
  - if their child is directed by the Board to attend a school other than their designated home school,
  - when a school boundary has been changed, and
  - when a new school opens.
- understand and adhere to eligibility requirements as outlined in the Student Transportation policy;
- take responsibility for ensuring safe, age-appropriate methods of travel to and/or from school if their child(ren) is not eligible for Board-provisioned transportation;
- ensure their child(ren) arrive at the school bus stop on time for pick up;
- ensure that;
  - their child(ren) are escorted to, or met by, a responsible party at school bus stops, or
  - other age-appropriate arrangements are made for their child(ren) after departing the bus, including, but not limited to, walking home on their own;
- take responsibility for ensuring safe, age-appropriate methods of travel to and/or from school if their child(ren) who, by choice, attend a school other than their designated home school unless attending a transportation approved optional program;
- ensure the safety, and responsible behaviour of their child(ren) prior to pick-up and following drop-off at the end of the school day; and
- ensure their child(ren) is dropped off and picked up for extra-curricular activities, field trips and/or extended student travel.

## **Definitions**

### *Child Care Transportation*

Transportation is provided to before and after care providers identified by the child care coordinator, consistent with the transportation policy. Where changes to transportation arrangements to child care facilities are deemed necessary they will be effective at the start of the subsequent school year.

### *Temporary Transportation*

Short-term service to transport students to and/or from school.

Approval of temporary transportation may only be granted by the Associate Director of Education and Chief Financial Officer in consultation with superintendents and any other appropriate staff members. Decisions will be made based on the following criteria:

- requests will be made in writing by the parent to the superintendent of education;
- the maximum length of approval is for the duration of the current school year or less;
- a cost analysis will be performed by Student Transportation Services;

- logistics such as routing and stops will be considered; and
- there must be room on an existing bus.

Where approval is granted, the conditions for temporary transportation will be communicated in writing by the superintendent of education to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Temporary transportation may be revoked as required throughout the school year. Students who apply for transfer as defined by Policy #108, [Student Accommodation - Attendance Areas and Student Transfers](#) do **not** qualify for transportation nor would they be considered for temporary transportation.

#### *Inclement Weather*

Road or weather conditions which make it hazardous to operate a bus.

#### *Joint Board Consortium*

A committee of trustees and staff from the York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board and Student Transportation Services who are responsible for overseeing student transportation in York Region.

#### *Pick-Up and Drop-Off Times*

Times determined by Student Transportation Services when the school bus will pick-up and drop-off students at their designated school bus stop.

#### *School Bus Vendors*

Private companies who have been contracted by Student Transportation Services (STS) to provide busing to students in York Region. School bus vendors provide the equipment, maintenance and drivers, and operate on routes designed and supervised by STS.

#### *Students with Medical Certificates*

Students with medical certificates, provided by a qualified medical practitioner, are students who are unable to walk to school because of physical or health reasons. Medical certificates must be consistent with school observations and programming to qualify and an application for temporary transportation must be completed. No other student shall be transported for any reason beyond the provisions of this policy and procedure, including, but not limited to, any pick-up or drop-off point other than the student's assigned bus stop.

### **History**

January 1985

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