



OSTA

Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority

Transportation Services

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Policy Name: Transportation Services

Approved by motion of Board on

28/09/2015

Cross Reference

- T1 – Access to Empty Seats on School Buses;
- T2 – Adult Passengers on Contract Vehicles;
- T11 – Stop Locations;
- T17 – Weighted Vehicle Loading Capacity for School Buses;
- T21 – Accessible Transportation

Related Forms

Request for Approval – Special Transportation Form (for OCSB students only)

Policy Statement

1. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall provide home-to-school transportation service to students eligible for transportation in accordance with transportation entitlement policies.
2. The General Manager shall be responsible for ensuring the establishment of fair and equitable application of all policies and procedures to both member school boards and their students.
3. Transportation service by contracted school vehicle shall be provided to and from a pick-up and/or drop-off point that is consistent, five days a week, except in the case of a student in a joint custody arrangement and having two homes.
4. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall ensure transportation services are provided in the most cost effective and efficient means possible, which may result in the transportation of elementary and secondary students together on the same vehicles, if necessary.
5. All distance measurements shall be determined using the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority's approved transportation software.
6. A student's total ride time on a school bus or small school purpose vehicle, from their home to their home school of attendance and in a regular English program, shall not exceed one(1) hour. Calculation of ride time is based on clear weather

and road conditions. Students in special programs, including French Immersion, may, on occasion, have longer ride times due to distance

7. Passengers on contracted school purpose vehicles shall be strictly limited to students of member school boards, unless otherwise provided for under this policy and/or unless permission to carry other persons is specifically obtained from the General Manager (or designate) of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, in accordance with OSTA's "Adult Passengers on Contract Vehicles" policy.
8. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall establish maximum operational vehicle loading capacities (Weighted Loading Capacity) so as to ensure the safe and comfortable seating of eligible students during transport.
9. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall ensure that route, stop, and student transportation information is maintained accurately at all times so that current information is available to authorized internal and external users of transportation system information.
10. The school shall ensure the accuracy of student demographic and program data in the school's database system.
11. The OSTA shall establish standard criteria by which hazards, either temporary or permanent, may be evaluated and addressed. Hazard assessment methodology shall be applied consistently to schools within the OCSB and OCDSB, at the OSTA's discretion.

Periodic review of the hazard zone criteria and assessment methodology, and temporary transportation zone safety exceptions, shall be undertaken and adjustments made to reflect changing local conditions at the discretion of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority.

12. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall work with its internal and external stakeholders to pursue harmonization of transportation policies and procedures for the students of member school boards, as much as reasonably possible.
13. Non-resident students including Visa students (fee-paying foreign students, native students, and students from out of province) attending member school board schools shall be provided transportation in accordance with applicable school board entitlement provisions.

Procedure

1. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority is responsible for the provision and administration of all transportation service for eligible students of member school boards through:
 - a) school buses;
 - b) public transit; and
 - c) other contracted small vehicles as may be required; and

2. Road Network:

Transportation will not be provided on roads that are not assumed nor maintained year round by the municipality. School bus vehicles will also not be required to drive into apartment or townhouse complexes.

In certain situations where roads are not yet assumed by a municipality but are otherwise maintained (e.g., new subdivision), school bus service will be considered on these roads in consultation with the local municipality and subject to the approval of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority.

Students eligible for transportation who reside within such areas may be required to travel to an existing stop regardless of the distance, if a safe bus stop location cannot be established within the distances outlined under OSTA policy "Stop Locations" and Administrative Procedures #1 therein.

3. Transfers:

Transfers of students from one school vehicle to another while en route either to or from school are permitted provided that adequate measures are in place to ensure the safety or controlled supervision of students and that:

- a) no pupil will ride on more than two (2) buses while travelling either to or from school, except those students travelling by public transit; and
- b) no pupil will be discharged from a bus at a rural transfer point until the bus onto which he/she is to transfer has arrived.

4. School Arrival and Departure:

Transportation route services will be designed to arrive at school locations:

- a) no more than fifteen (15) minutes before the established school bell time for inbound services;
- b) no more than fifteen (15) minutes in advance of the after school bell at the end of the school day; and
- c) to depart school locations no more than fifteen (15) minutes after the established bell time for a school or program.

5. Routes:

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority is responsible for the establishment of bus routes and subsequent changes to routes, in consultation with school bus operators and school principals, as required.

Where possible and respecting the requirements of operational efficiencies, school bus routes will be planned to limit the number of pupils having to cross in front of a school vehicle.

Once school bus routes have been established each school year, changes to routes will be considered to accommodate new students or students who change residence, where bus stops do not already exist.

Changes to transportation routes will only be made with the approval of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority.

6. Emergency or Short Term Changes

In the case of an emergency/extenuating circumstance, changes to a student's transportation schedule will be arranged by the school Principal in accordance with Administrative Procedure #9 of OSTA's "Access to Empty Seats on School Bus Vehicles" policy.

Changes to student pick-up and drop-off locations will not be made to accommodate personal appointments and/or lessons, work placements, parent vacations, or travel to a friend's home. Such transportation arrangements are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

7. Medical Condition/Short-Term Impairment

Students requiring transportation because of a temporary medical condition may request assistance. Parents will request accessible transportation services through the school principal. The principal will complete an "Accessible Transportation Request Form", outlining the need for temporary accessible transportation and any special instructions or equipment required for the safe transport of the student. A physician's letter/medical certificate and/or other supporting documentation will be required. A time limit shall be set on the application, which may be renewed as required.

For students of OCDSB, the Superintendent of the school approves accessible transportation on a short-term basis.

For students of OCSB, the Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services approves accessible transportation on a short- or long-term basis.

8. Travel Time

The OSTA endeavours to plan routes that maximize the efficient use of resources while maintaining consideration for the length of vehicle travel times for students.

Where feasible, except in special circumstances, the OSTA will plan student transportation services based on a preferred travel time of 45 minutes or less per one-way trip for the majority of students serviced.

Travel time will be calculated based on the time a student is travelling on the bus beginning at the scheduled pickup time and ending at scheduled arrival time at the school, not more than fifteen minutes prior to bell time.

Travel time will be calculated using the OSTA's approved software based on normal traffic and weather conditions. Students who reside in remote or isolated areas, or who attend specialized or Magnet programs and whose distance to the school attended is significant, may experience travel times in excess of the OSTA's preferred travel time guideline. Similarly, where temporary weather, construction and/or road conditions result in general travel delays, students may experience ride times in excess of the 45 minute guideline.

9. Children of Contracted Service Providers

Permission may be granted to children of school bus drivers to accompany their driver parent on their assigned route.

All requests shall be made annually in writing to the General Manager (or designate) of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority and will be considered on a space-available basis, provided such arrangements will not affect the safe and professional operation of the school bus route. The accommodation of children of driver-parents will be prioritized over empty seat/courtesy rider applicants.

The contracted school bus operator will be responsible for the provision of all necessary approved child-restraint equipment and will ensure that such equipment is installed according to all manufacturer specifications.

These arrangements may be cancelled at any time by the General Manager (or designate) of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority at their discretion.

10. Availability of Transportation Information

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will make accurate route information available to school Principals and school bus operators in advance of the commencement of the school year and at all times during the school year.

Schedules showing pick-up points for each route will be prepared each school year and made available to school staff, and school bus operators on the OSTA's

website. Individual student stop and route information may be accessed via OSTA's web-based Parent Portal throughout the year.

11. School Vehicle Operations and Schedules

Students should be at their designated bus stop location at least five (5) minutes in advance of the scheduled and/or published pick-up time.

Where pick-up times have been established, drivers of school vehicles will not be required to wait for students at pick-up points beyond the regularly scheduled pick-up time. If service providers depart the pick-up point before the regularly scheduled time, the service provider will be held responsible and may be required to assume the cost of any replacement transportation as may be necessary for students who have missed their bus.

Should a school vehicle become inoperative en route, the service provider will be responsible for ensuring that the affected school Principals and the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority are notified as soon as possible. It will be the responsibility of the contracted operator to provide alternate transportation with a minimum of delay.

If for any reason a school vehicle will be more than fifteen minutes late on route to school, the service provider will ensure that the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority and affected school Principals are notified as soon as possible. The Operator is responsible for posting delays on the Bus Planner Web Portal.

If for any reason a school vehicle will be late in arriving at school for the noon or afternoon dismissal, the service provider will ensure that the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority and affected school Principals are notified.

12. Accessible Transportation for Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs, who have been so identified by appropriate member school board personnel, will be provided with pick-up/drop-off location as close to, and as convenient as possible to, the student's residence or caregiver location.

To ensure the safety of students who are physically/emotionally/intellectually challenged and have special needs, contracted operators and their drivers will deliver each student into the care of a responsible adult. In the event that a responsible adult is not available at home or school locations, transportation may be forfeit at the discretion of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority.

Students in grades 9-12 with physical disabilities may be dropped off without supervision with parent/guardian written authorization.

13. Walking Hazard Zone Reviews will be conducted according to Hazard Zone Review Procedure

14. Excursions/Extra-Curricular Activities

The OSTA does not provide transportation for excursions or extra-curricular activities.

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will post annually a listing of approved transportation service providers on its website for school administration staff to reference in planning and booking excursion/extra-curricular activities for students.

School administration staffs are responsible for the planning, booking, and funding of excursion, extra-curricular, and late busing transportation arrangements with a transportation service provider of their choice.

Schools contracting excursion services through service providers not listed in the approved service providers listing provided by the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority should obtain confirmation and proof from the transportation provider that they have the authority to provide excursion services for their school.

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority can not recommend or rate the services of service providers not under contract with our organization.

The school principal assumes all responsibility for transportation of parents/volunteers and/or other adults on excursion/extra-curricular buses. OSTA does not allow parents/volunteers to travel on regular home to school buses according to Policy T2 Adult Passengers on Contract Vehicles

15. School-to-School Transportation

The OCDSB approves the provision of transportation for students enrolled in schools in its jurisdiction who are required to attend other Board schools during the school day for a course of study requiring special facilities and equipment not available in the home school. Any additional costs will be funded by the appropriate central department and transportation will be managed by OSTA.

16. Declining Transportation Services

Parents of students eligible for transportation service who do NOT wish to access transportation services provided by OSTA may advise their school staff, in writing, that they wish to decline transportation services for that school year. The school shall update its database and, subsequently, OSTA will remove the child from any school bus routes. That space may be used for another eligible student or an empty seat application, as required.

17. Reports Of Driver Misconduct

Concerns with a driver's conduct will be addressed by school Principals. Concerns that cannot be resolved by the Principal through discussion with the

driver and/or the contracted operator should be referred to the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority.

18. Duty Of Service Provider

It is the duty of the service provider to ensure that the driver of a contracted vehicle is advised of all pertinent member school board and Ottawa Student Transportation Authority policies and procedures applicable to the transportation of member school board students.