



OSTA

Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority

FAQ – Variable Transportation to Two Homes for Students in a Joint Custody Arrangement

What is Variable Transportation?

OSTA provides transportation services to eligible students based on the address used at the school for registration purposes. The schedule must be consistent 5 days per week.

Variable Transportation is when OSTA provides transportation services to students who have a joint custody/access arrangement and whose two homes meet all eligibility requirements. Custody/access arrangements sometimes vary in different families and different transportation schedules may be required. However, the schedule must be consistent on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

Why is the OSTA creating a new policy to transport students to two homes?

As the result of a Human Rights Tribunal outcome, it has been determined that students who live in a joint custody/access arrangement with their parents or guardians should receive transportation to both of their homes. Currently, the OSTA does transport students to two homes based on a schedule that is consistent 5 days a week on a “per case” basis. A clear policy and procedure is needed to facilitate access to these transportation services for students with two homes and to ensure the safety of the student during transportation.

How was this policy created?

OSTA reviewed existing policies and procedures available at other consortia in Ontario as well as the outcomes from the Human Rights Tribunal. A meeting with the Executive Director of the Fair Parenting Group also provided some insight as to the challenges faced by families with different custody/access arrangements.

OSTA staff brought the framework of the policy and procedure to the Variable Transportation Working Group, which was an internal staff committee from OCDSB/OCSB created to discuss operational impacts, safety issues and communication with stakeholders. OSTA is now seeking feedback from its other stakeholders.

Why do both parents/guardians need to sign the application form?

As OSTA will be transporting their child(ren) to different addresses on different days of the week, it is important that both parents/guardians understand and agree to the schedule and to the locations. Both parents/guardians don't need to sign the same form. However, if they choose to submit different application forms, the content must still be identical. Any discrepancies will result in the application being sent back to the applicants for clarification.

What happens if one parent/guardian lives outside the school attendance boundary?



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The addresses to which OSTA will transport the student, whether a home address or childcare, MUST be within the attendance boundary for the student's school and MUST be eligible for transportation based on OSTA's Transportation Eligibility Policy T18.

Safety seems to be a major factor in OSTA's assessment of whether or not variable transportation will be approved. What type of risks could my child(ren) face?

Any time a student travels to and from school, there is the risk they will get on the wrong bus, get off at the wrong stop, miss their bus, a parent might forget to meet their kindergarten student and so on. This happens every day with students who have only one home. An alternating schedule which may occur on different vehicles located at different areas on the school grounds and stopping at different locations is more challenging for a child to manage on his/her own. It is very important that parents/guardians have a good grasp of their child's ability to understand the schedule and to self-advocate when transportation does not go as planned.