



OSTA

Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority

Ottawa Walking School Bus (WSB) Program – Procedures

Version: 21 August 2015

Funding and Non-Funding Partners

Funding: Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (representing Ottawa-Carleton DSB and Ottawa Catholic SB), City of Ottawa.

Non-Funding: Ottawa Safety Council, Green Communities Canada, Ottawa Public Health.

Eligibility

Any student enrolled at a school participating in the program and who wishes to walk the route established for the WSB is welcome to join the group. Registration via the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) web site will be required. A maximum of 20 registrations per route will be accepted. The registration form must be completed, printed, signed and submitted to the school before participation is confirmed. Participants will be accepted on a "first come, first serve basis" as of the date of email registration, providing a written confirmation of the registration is also received. Students using mobility aids may also participate however a barrier-free route cannot be guaranteed. Note that students with life threatening medical conditions may not receive the appropriate medical attention should an emergency situation arise.

Duration

The WSB's will operate on every regular school day between the first day of school in September to the end of June.

Routes

WSB routes are established by OSTA and are designed to provide access to students from residential areas to their school within OSTA's established walk zones. The number and location of routes is at the sole discretion of OSTA. WSB routes will operate in the morning for the journey to school. The WSB will not be offered after school. Travel time will not exceed 30 minutes and it is scheduled to arrive at the school no later than 5 minutes before the bell

Stops

Designated stops on WSB routes will be established at regular intervals. Students are expected to join at the stop nearest to their residence, but may join the WSB at any point along the route. The WSB will not wait for late arrivals. There are NO maximum distance requirements for WSB stops and door-to-door or other special stops will not be established.

Safety & Liability

Each WSB route will be led by a WSB "Leader". This Leader is employed and assigned to the route by the Ottawa Safety Council and is subject to the same training and other requirements as an Adult Crossing Guard including a Criminal Reference Check for the Vulnerable Sector. Liability insurance coverage will be provided by the Safety Council. The following ratios for Leaders to walker will apply:

- Up to 10 registered students: 1 Leader
- From 11-20 registered students: 2 Leaders

Routes will use the road, sidewalk and winter-maintained pathway networks in OSTA's mapping software and will respect established walking hazards according to OSTA's Hazard Zone Criteria and Assessment Methodology.

Cancellations

WSB routes will operate in all weather conditions. However, special circumstances may arise such as freezing rain or other extreme weather events (as determined by the Ottawa Safety Council) that may

require a WSB route to be cancelled. If such a cancellation does occur, communication with parents will ensue no later than 30 minutes before the route is scheduled to begin.

Waitlist

When the first 10 registered students on a route have been confirmed, additional registrations will be placed on a wait list until such time as, at the discretion of OSTA, a second Leader is assigned to the route.

Withdrawal

Parents/guardians may withdraw their child from the WSB at anytime by notifying OSTA (businfo@ottawaschoolbus.ca or 613.224.8800) specifying the last day their child will participate. Once the request has been confirmed, the space will be offered to a student on the wait list (where applicable).

Stakeholder Responsibility

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that the student has joined the WSB on any given day, (attendance will not be taken by the WSB Leader), is dressed appropriately for the weather, and is able to walk the required distance along the route. Should the student have a life-threatening allergy requiring epinephrine auto-injector, the parent/guardian must ensure the child has the auto-injector on his or her person and notify the WSB Leader of the student's allergy and treatment.

Students are responsible for following the Leader's instructions, respecting traffic and pedestrian safety rules, behaving in an appropriate manner and carrying his/her own backpack, bag or other equipment at all times.

Principals are responsible for disciplining students who do not behave in a safe or appropriate way during the walk to school as reported to them by the WSB Leader. The Principal will ensure that all documentation required by the school board's policy with regards to life-threatening allergies is duly completed and a copy submitted to OSTA (*OSTA – Life-Threatening Medical Condition Emergency Transportation Form*)

WSB Leaders are responsible for walking the route as designed by OSTA, managing the students along the route, acknowledging students who join the group (whenever possible) and reporting any discipline issues to the Principal. The WSB Leader must respond to emergency situations according to the Ottawa Safety Council's emergency protocols and procedures and report all emergencies, incidents or accidents to the Ottawa Safety Council. Emergency response may include administering first aid, epinephrine auto-injector or calling 911.

The Ottawa Safety Council is responsible for ensuring that the WSB Leaders have all required documentation upon hiring. It also trains, manages, and assigns the Leader to a specific route and responds to all inquiries or emergencies. It will advise OSTA of all incidents and emergencies.

OSTA is responsible for policies and procedures with regards to walk zones, assessing walking hazards, creating the route and stops, communicating with parents, school staff and the Ottawa Safety Council and responding to all inquiries and emergencies. OSTA will compile the necessary documentation for students who have life-threatening allergies and who may require the administration of epinephrine auto-injectors, and distribute this information to the Ottawa Safety Council.

The City of Ottawa is responsible for ensuring the clearing of roadway, sidewalk and designated pathways of snow and debris in accordance with service schedules established by the municipality.

Emergencies/Incidents

All emergencies, complaints or issues will be reported to the Ottawa Safety Council at 613.238.1513 ext 224. Incidents or accidents will be reported and tracked by Ottawa Safety Council according to OSTA's current policy (T8 - Reporting of Accidents). The Safety Council will forward all reports to OSTA within 24 hours.